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I. General information on the reporting State

A. Demographic, economic, social and cultural characteristics

1. General framework

1. The Republic of Slovenia is a parliamentary democratic republic; it became independent after the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1991.

2. Following the attainment of independence, Slovenia pursued its strategic developmental and security interests by joining numerous international and regional organisations: in March 1992, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe; in May 1992, the United Nations; in May 1993, the Council of Europe; in March 2004, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and in May 2004, the European Union (EU).

3. Slovenia extends over 20,300 km^2, bordering Austria in the north, Italy in the West, Croatia in the south and east, and Hungary in the east. Its coastline of some 47 km runs along the Adriatic Sea. At 2,864 metres, its highest mountain is Triglav, located in the Julian Alps. Incorporated in the national coat of arms, this triple-peak mountain is Slovenia's national symbol.

4. The official language in Slovenia is Slovene; in the municipalities in which Italian or Hungarian national communities reside, Italian or Hungarian are also official languages.

5. The capital of Slovenia, as well as its geographical, cultural, scientific, economic, political, and administrative centre, is Ljubljana.

6. On 1 January 2007, the euro was introduced in Slovenia to replace the *tolar* as legal tender.

7. Due to its natural and social characteristics, Slovenia is a contact and transit country. Slovenia is the meeting point of four linguistic and cultural regions: Slavic, Germanic, Romance, and Finno-Ugric (Hungarian). Also, four major geographical phenomena meet and overlap in Slovenia, i.e. the Alps, the Dinarides, the Pannonian Basin, and the Mediterranean. The rich diversity of its geology, relief, and climate, and their interaction, provided the basis for Slovenia's soil and biotic diversity.

8. The climate in Slovenia is moderate, although it varies considerably according to the country's geographical diversity. Slovenia has three different climates: the coastal region is characterised by a Mediterranean climate; the central region and the Pannonian region in the east have a continental climate; and north-western Slovenia has an Alpine climate.

9. It is rich in forest resources; 12,114.1 km^2, i.e. 59.8%, of its total area is woodland, in which some 950 plant species, including 71 tree species, are found. Slovenian forests are home to 95 bird species, 70 mammal species, 17 amphibian species, and 10 reptile species. The forests absorb 7.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, part of which is stored in wood, and produce approximately 5.5 million tonnes of oxygen, thus representing, in global terms, a major carbon sink.

10. Approximately 8% of Slovenia's territory is protected by environmental protection legislation, with Triglav National Park (83,807 ha) being the largest area. The great diversity of animal and plant species in Slovenia is made possible by the country's rich geology and diverse relief, ranging from sea level to 2864 m, and because the country extends over four bio-geographical regions.

2. Population

11. On 1 January 2013, Slovenia's population was 2,058,821, of which 1,019,061 men and 1,039,760 women. The average population density is 101 people per km^2.

12. The population has increased by 2.9% since 1991, and since 2009 by 1.3%, mainly owing to immigration, which is also demonstrated by the net migration change of 65,000 people and natural change of only 15,000 people between 2003 and 2012.

Table 1
Population by age and sex, Slovenia, 1 January 1991–2013

Sex	*Age*	*1991*	*2000*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*
Total	**Total**	**1,999,945**	**1,987,755**	**2,032,362**	**2,046,976**	**2,050,189**	**2,055,496**	**2,058,821**
	0-14 years	411,072	320,374	284,054	287,275	290,853	294,149	298,095
	15-64 years	1,372,530	1,391,981	1,414,279	1,421,436	1,420,392	1,416,347	1,408,581
	65 years and over	216,343	275,400	334,029	338,265	338,944	345,000	352,145
Males	**Total**	**970,229**	**970,812**	**1,003,945**	**1,014,107**	**1,014,563**	**1,016,731**	**1,019,061**
	0-14 years	211,000	164,437	145,974	147,808	149,702	151,314	153,462
	15-64 years	684,333	705,782	727,258	732,992	730,685	727,951	723,921
	65 years and over	74,896	100,593	130,713	133,307	134,176	137,466	141,678
Females	**Total**	**1,029,716**	**1,016,943**	**1,028,417**	**1,032,869**	**1,035,626**	**1,038,765**	**1,039,760**
	0-14 years	200,072	155,937	138,080	139,467	141,151	142,835	144,633
	15-64 years	688,197	686,199	687,021	688,444	689,707	688,396	684,660
	65 years and over	141,447	174,807	203,316	204,958	204,768	207,534	210,467

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

13. Since 1991, the median age of the population has increased by 6.2 years. The percentage of the elderly has increased by 6.3 percentage points, whereas the percentage of children (0–14 years) has decreased by 6.1 percentage points; in the past five years, however, this percentage has increased by 0.5 percentage points.

Table 2
Population by age, Slovenia, 1 January 1991–2013

	1991	*2000*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*
Median age (in years)	35.9	38.6	41.3	41.4	41.7	41.9	42.1
0–14 years (%)	20.6	16.1	14.0	14.0	14.2	14.3	14.5
15–64 years (%)	68.6	70.0	69.6	69.4	69.3	68.9	68.4
65 years and over (%)	10.8	13.9	16.4	16.5	16.5	16.8	17.1

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

14. On 1 January 2013, foreign nationals accounted for 4.4% of the total Slovenian population, and since 1995, this percentage has increased by 2.1 percentage points, with the number of males being significantly greater than that of females; in recent years, however,

the percentage of women has been increasing. The increase in the number of foreign nationals among the Slovenian population can be accounted for largely by immigration.

Table 3
Foreign nationals, Slovenia, 1 January 2009–2013

	2009	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*
Total	**70,723**	**82,316**	**82,746**	**85,555**	**91,385**
Males	52,083	60,156	58,697	59,214	62,121
Females	18,640	22,160	24,049	26,341	29,264

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

15. Approximately half of Slovenia's population live in urban areas, and this percentage has remained unchanged for several years.

3. Population projection

16. According to the Europop2010 population projection, Slovenia is expected to experience relatively fast population growth by around 2025 (some 2,155,000), when the population will start decreasing slowly. It is projected that by 1 January 2060, Slovenia will have a population of some 2,057,964 people, representing a 0.5% increase with respect to the first projection year (2010).

17. Slovenia's immigration rates are expected to exceed emigration rates in 2060 by 3,817 people. Also, Slovenia's total fertility rates are projected to rise steadily to reach 1.65 by 2060. In Slovenia, life expectancy at birth is projected to increase: males born in 2060 are expected to reach the age of 84, and females almost the age of 89.

18. Furthermore, a significant change is projected in the age structure of Slovenia's population: the percentage of children (under 15) is expected to continue to rise slightly in the next ten years or so, whereupon it is expected to start decreasing. It is assumed that in 2060, Slovenia will have 100 working-age people (aged 15–64) for every 58 elderly and 25 children (in 2010, 24 and 20, respectively).

Table 4
EUROPOP2010 population projections for Slovenia, 2010–2060

	Total population	*Aged 0–14 (%)[1]*	*Aged 15–64 (%)**	*Aged 65 and over (%)**	*Aged 80 and over (%)*	*Old-age dependency ratio (%)*
2010	2,046,976	14.0	69.4	16.5	3.9	23.8
2015	2,106,182	14.7	67.8	17.5	4.7	25.8
2020	2,142,217	15.2	65.0	19.8	5.2	30.4
2025	2,154,934	14.7	63.3	22.0	5.7	34.8
2030	2,154,609	13.7	62.2	24.2	6.3	38.8
2035	2,148,629	12.9	61.0	26.1	7.9	42.7
2040	2,141,070	12.9	59.6	27.5	9.2	46.1
2045	2,131,661	13.4	57.4	29.2	10.2	50.8
2050	2,114,985	13.9	55.5	30.6	10.9	55.0
2055	2,089,905	13.9	54.5	31.5	11.6	57.8
2060	2,057,964	13.7	54.8	31.6	12.7	57.6

Source: Eurostat.

* Due to rounding, the sum of percentages does not always equal 100.0%.

4. Fertility rate

19. Slovenia's fertility rates have been on the decrease for more than 100 years, especially after 1980; in 1992, the number of live births fell under 20,000. The lowest fertility rate was recorded in 2003 (17,321 births), afterwards the number of births slowly started to increase, reaching 21,938 in 2012. The increase in births in recent years is related to the age structure of the population on the one hand and to the trend of delaying motherhood on the other. The population of women aged between 25 and 35, i.e. the most fertile age group, is still relatively large. However, their numbers are expected to decrease gradually, resulting in a new fall in the birth rate. In recent years, women at birth are on average 4 years older than in the early 1990s.

20. In 2012, the mean age of women at birth was 30.5 years, with 28.9 years at first birth. The trend of delaying motherhood is still strong: 2012 registered the highest mean age of mothers at birth after the Second World War.

21. More than one half (54%) of women who gave birth in 2012 were aged 30 or more, while 20 years ago (1991), the share amounted to 21%. Between 1991 and 2012, the share of women aged 25 or less at birth fell from 45 to 13%.

22. Over the last decades, the same trend of the increasing age of parenthood has been observed in men, with 33.2 years being the median age of first-time fathers in 2012, which is an increase of nearly 4 years over the last two decades.

23. Despite the modest increase in births since 2003, women now have fewer children than in previous decades. In 2012, the total fertility rate, i.e. the average number of live-born children per woman in her child-bearing years (at the current mortality rate and based on the expectation that the woman will live past her 49th birthday), was at 1.58. Similar figures were recorded at the end of the 1980s. Despite the increase in the past decade, the population replacement rate in Slovenia continues to decline.

24. Since 2007, 50% of babies were born to unmarried mothers or in extra-marital unions; in 2012, the percentage was 57.6. In most cases (around 70%), paternity is acknowledged before the birth. According to these data, marriage is no longer the prevailing type of family unit among young people; the share of unmarried mothers at birth has been increasing since the mid-1970s, when there was no difference between the share of children born to unmarried and married couples. In 2012, the share of unmarried mothers aged 42 or less at first birth exceeded one half. Altogether in 2012, two-thirds (65%) of first-born children were born outside marriage.

25. Abortion was legalised in 1977, and the number of legal abortions has been decreasing since 1982, i.e. by two-thirds over the past 20 years. In 2012, there were 4,106 legal abortions, equalling 19% of live births; 8.7 legal abortions were performed per thousand women aged 15–49 years. The highest percentage was in the age group of 30–34 years (14 abortions per thousand women).

Table 5
Selected fertility rate indicators, Slovenia, 1991–2012

	Live births					*Mean age of mother at birth*		*Age of mother*		*Legal abortions*	
Year	***Total***	*Per 1,000 inhabitants*	*Live births outside marriage (%)*	*Third birth or more (%)*	*Total fertility rate*	*All live births*	*First birth*	*Up to 25 years (%)*	*35 years and over (%)*	*Number*	*Rate*
1991	**21,583**	10.8	26.4	13.3	1.42	26.3	24.1	44.8	6.1	14,027	27.4
2000	**18,180**	9.1	37.1	13.8	1.26	28.3	26.5	26.4	9.6	8,429	16.4
2008	**21,817**	10.8	52.9	14.2	1.53	30.1	28.4	14.0	14.5	4,946	10.2
2009	**21,856**	10.7	53.8	14.5	1.53	30.1	28.5	13.5	14.8	4,653	9.6
2010	**22,343**	10.9	55.7	14.1	1.57	30.3	28.7	12.9	15.7	4,328	9.0
2011	**21,947**	10.7	56.8	13.6	1.56	30.4	28.8	12.7	16.6	4,263	9.0
2012	**21,938**	10.7	57.6	13.4	1.58	30.5	28.9	12.6	17.2	4,106	8.7

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

5. Mortality rate

26. The mortality rate data show no significant changes over the last 20 years (18,000–19,000 deaths per year). Despite some minor fluctuations between years, the rate continues to decrease. In 2012, the number of deaths (19,257) was 9.4 per 1,000 people.

27. Over the past 20 years, the mean age at death has increased. In 2012, men at death were, on average, 5.9 years older, while women were 5.2 years older than in 1982. It is well known that, on average, women have a slightly longer life expectancy than men. Consequently, in 2012, the mean age at death was 8.2 years higher for women than for men, with the age for men being 71.8 and the age for women 80.

28. Nevertheless, the difference in life expectancy between men and women is gradually decreasing. Between 1982 and 2012, it fell from 7.9 to 5.9 years. Given the current mortality rate, the life expectancy of a boy born in 2012 is 77 years and that of a girl is 82.9. Over the past 20 years, life expectancy has increased by 7.5 years for men and 5.6 years for women.

29. The infant mortality rate continues to decrease. In 2012, 18 boys and 18 girls died in their first year. Over the last 20 years, the infant mortality rate has decreased by one-fifth. In 1992, the rate was 8.9 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, while in 2012, the rate fell below 2 for the first time, amounting to 1.6, which is the lowest value ever. Slovenia is also among the European countries with the lowest infant mortality rate. With the decline in the indicator in 2012, Slovenia became the country with the lowest infant mortality rate among the EU-27 member States.

Table 6
Selected mortality indicators, Slovenia, 1991–2012

	Deaths		*Mean age at death*		*Infant deaths per 1,000 live births*		*Life expectancy*	
Year	***Total***	*Per 1,000 inhabitants*	*Males*	*Females*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Males*	*Females*
1991	**19,324**	9.7	65.4	75.0	10.5	5.8	69.5	77.3
2000	**18,588**	9.3	67.2	75.6	5.6	4.2	72.1	79.6
2008	**18,308**	9.1	69.9	78.8	2.7	2.1	75.4	82.3
2009	**18,750**	9.2	70.1	79.1	2.2	2.6	75.8	82.3
2010	**18,609**	9.1	70.7	79.3	2.1	3.0	76.3	82.7
2011	**18,699**	9.1	71.2	79.7	3.6	2.1	76.6	82.9
2012	**19,257**	9.4	71.8	80.0	1.6	1.7	77.0	82.9

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

Table 7
Leading causes of death, Slovenia, 2008–2012

	2008	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
Cardiovascular diseases	7,237	7,475	7,385	7,313	7,570
Neoplasms	5,762	5,805	5,902	5,896	5,847
Respiratory diseases	1,144	1,271	1,122	1,197	1,386
Injuries, poisoning and other effects of external causes	1,404	1,450	1,363	1,363	1,357
Digestive diseases	1,184	1,160	1,179	1,139	1,185
Endocrines, nutritional and metabolic diseases	316	284	297	355	392
Urinary and genital diseases	220	263	277	328	342
Neurologic diseases	280	321	313	338	341
Other symptoms, signs and abnormal clinical or laboratory results	181	251	276	273	309
Certain infectious and parasitic diseases	143	94	86	78	108

Source: Public Health Institute.

6. International migration

30. Even before its independence, Slovenia was a popular immigration destination for residents of the less-developed regions of the former Yugoslavia. The majority were economic immigrants who were not Slovenians by origin, but some of them were also of Slovenian descent. The same trend continued after independence, with immigrants and emigrants being mainly foreign nationals. Some have settled permanently in Slovenia, resulting in a constantly positive net migration growth of foreign nationals. By contrast, a negative net migration growth of Slovenian citizens was recorded, culminating in 2012. The reasons for immigration are mainly economic, but there is also a significant trend of secondary immigration, i.e. the immigration of family members of foreign nationals already residing in the country (primarily from the territory of the former Yugoslavia). Slovenian citizens migrate mainly to EU countries (mainly to Germany and Austria).

Table 8
International migration, Slovenia, 2000–2012

	Immigrants			*Emigrants*			*Net migration growth*		
	Total	*Citizens of Slovenia*	*Foreign nationals*	***Total***	*Citizens of Slovenia*	*Foreign nationals*	***Total***	*Citizens of Slovenia*	*Foreign nationals*
2000	**6,185**	935	5,250	**3,570**	1,559	2,011	**2,615**	-624	3,239
2008	**30,693**	2,631	28,062	**12,109**	4,766	7,343	**18,584**	-2,135	20,719
2009	**30,296**	2,903	27,393	**18,788**	3,717	15,071	**11,508**	-814	12,322
2010	**15,416**	2,711	12,705	**15,937**	3,905	12,032	**-521**	-1,194	673
2011	**14,083**	3,318	10,765	**12,024**	4,679	7,345	**2,059**	-1,361	3,420
2012	**15,022**	2,741	12,281	**14,378**	8,191	6,187	**644**	-5,450	6,094

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

31. On 1 January 2011, Slovenia registered 229,000 immigrant residents (11%). The first residence of the majority was in one of the following countries: in other countries emerging from the former Yugoslavia (as many as 87%), Austria, Italy, Germany, Ukraine, France, the Russian Federation and Switzerland. Two-thirds already held Slovenian citizenship (the majority obtained it shortly after independence), which puts Slovenia among the European countries with the highest percentage of citizens born abroad. In total, immigrant residents are coming from 165 countries.

7. Households and families

32. Between the 2002 Census and the beginning of 2011, the number of households increased from 128,000 to 684,847, while the average household size fell from 2.8 to 2.5 members. The increase is mainly due to population growth (compared to the data for 2002, the population has grown by 86,000 people) and intensive residential construction in this period, which enabled young people to leave their primary households, find their own place of residence and set up their own households or families; partly it is also a result of the large numbers of foreign nationals living in dormitories. This is also the reason for the biggest increase in single households (from 150,000 to 266,000).

33. Two-thirds of residents live in one-family households; in more than 90% of cases, the household consists of one (married couples or common-law partners) or two successive generations (parents and children), while 7% of households are composed of at least three generations.

34. Over the last 30 years, the share of single-parent families has increased the most, currently accounting for one-fourth of all families and one-third of families with children. The majority of single-parent families consist of a mother and children, with mothers being mostly single – never married (33%). In the age group below 42, most of these mothers are single, whereas in the group aged 43–60, most are divorced, and in the group over 60, widowed. The number of common-law marriages has also been on the rise: from 42,000 in 2002 to 61,000 in 2011. Nevertheless, a married couple with children still remains the most common type of family. However, this is also the only type the number of which has been declining for three decades. The reasons are manifold, i.e. the empty nest syndrome, when adult children leave their families to create a new one; divorce and changed traditional patterns in the life cycle, since marriage is no longer the only reason for two people to live together.

8. Educational structure of the population

35. The share of Slovenian citizens with higher (tertiary) education, i.e. completed short-cycle higher education or higher education, continues to rise, while the percentage of the population with basic education or even incomplete basic education is falling. This percentage is the highest among the elderly, while the majority of young people continue their studies at the upper secondary level. Between 2002 and 2011, the share of the population with basic education or less fell from 39 to 30%. The most significant changes have been recorded in the number of people with higher education: in 2002, 215,000 residents aged 15 or more (12.9%) had higher education; in 2011, their number attained 308,000, i.e. every sixth resident aged 15 or more. However, the population with completed technical or general upper secondary education (30.2% in 2011) still prevails.

36. On average, women are better educated than men, and the gap continues to grow. In 2002, the number of women with completed higher education for the first time exceeded that of men (by slightly more than a thousand). In 2011, 15.3% of men and 19.6% of women had a higher education degree. The share of men with a master's degree (*magisterij*) or doctoral degree is currently still larger, but only due to the significant difference in the number of older men and women with these degrees. However, women aged 25–41 (except those aged 32) with such degrees are already higher in number than men of the same age group.

37. In 2011, foreign nationals were, on average, slightly less educated than Slovenians; 5.9% of them had completed higher education and 50.2% upper secondary education.

Table 9
Population aged 15 or more by level of education and sex, Slovenia, the 2011 and 2002 censuses

Education	*2011 Census*			*2002 Census*		
	Total	*Males*	*Females*	***Total***	*Males*	*Females*
Total	**1,759,336**	**864,861**	**894,475**	**1,663,869**	**804,286**	**859,583**
Incomplete basic education	**77,971**	30,246	47,725	**115,556**	46,492	69,064
Basic education	**435,108**	183,159	251,949	**433,910**	169,509	264,401
Short vocational and vocational upper secondary education	**406,837**	259,650	147,187	**452,292**	280,373	171,919
Technical and general upper secondary education	**531,751**	259,711	272,040	**447,049**	206,915	240,134
Short-cycle higher education	**84,221**	37,141	47,080	**84,044**	36,083	47,961
1st and 2nd cycle higher education	**201,260**	82,689	118,571	**114,630**	55,070	59,560
Third-cycle master's or doctoral degree	**22,188**	12,265	9,923	**16,388**	9,844	6,544

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

38. The most recent survey of literacy was included in the 1991 Census (0.46% of illiterates); however, as a result of compulsory basic education, this phenomenon is no longer statistically typical, since basic education has been compulsory for several decades.

9. Ethnic, religious and linguistic structure

39. The latest data on the ethnic, religious and linguistic structure of the population based on the declarations of individuals were collected as part of the 2002 Census; answers about ethnic and religious affiliation were optional. Since Slovenia introduced a register-based census in 2011 and the references used in the 2011 Census contained no data on ethnic, religious or linguistic structure, such data about the entire population will no longer be available.

40. According to data collected by the censuses, Slovenians comprise the majority of the population; however, their share has been constantly decreasing (from 95.65% in 1961 to 83.06% in 2002) due to immigration and an increasing refusal to answer the questions about nationality.

41. Slovenia has two national communities that are recognised under the Constitution: the Hungarian in the north-east and the Italian national community in the south-west of the country. There is also a Roma community, which was granted a special status. The number of Hungarians living in Eastern Slovenia (the Pomurje region) decreased from 10,498 in 1961 to 6,243 in 2002, and the number of Italians living near the Italian border (the Coastal-Karst Region) declined from 3,072 in 1961 to 2,258 in 2002. In the 2002 Census, 3,246 residents declared themselves as Roma, while unofficial data indicate that their number is approximately 10,000.

42. The ethnic diversity of the population is mostly due to the immigration of citizens from regions of the former Yugoslavia (mostly in the 1970s and 1980s) and the ethnic declaration of their descendants. In 2002, the two largest groups were Serbs (38,964) and Croats (35,642), but their number has significantly decreased since the 1981 Census. On the other hand, the share of members of other ethnic groups from the former multi-ethnic Yugoslavia (mostly Bosnians, Macedonians and Albanians) has increased the most.

43. Since 2002, censuses no longer record data on religious affiliation, so no updated information is available. According to the 2002 Census, the vast majority of the population are Catholic (almost 58%), with Islam, and the Orthodox and Lutheran churches being the most represented religious communities (6% altogether). According to the 2007 Religious Freedom Act, which envisages a special legal organisational form for religious organisations, 46 churches and other religious communities were registered in 2014, including a large number of new religious and spiritual movements.

44. The language structure of the population mostly reflects its ethnic diversity; along with the prevailing Slovenian language (87.7% in the 2002 Census), languages from regions of the former Yugoslavia are the most represented.

Table 10
Population by ethnic affiliation and type of settlement (structural ratio), Slovenia, 2002 Census

Type of settlement	***Total***	*Slovenians*	*Italians*	*Hungarians*	*Roma*	*Serbs*	*Croats*	*Bosnians*	*Other*	*Unknown*
Total	**100**	**83.1**	**0.1**	**0.3**	**0.2**	**2.0**	**1.8**	**1.1**	**2.5**	**8.9**
Urban	**100**	77.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	3.4	2.8	1.9	4.1	10.3
Non-urban	**100**	89.3	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.5	0.8	0.3	0.9	7.5

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

Table 11

Population by religion and type of settlement (structural ratio), Slovenia, 2002 Census

Type of settlement	*Total*	*Catholic*	*Evangelical*	*Orthodox*	*Islam*	*Atheist*	*Other*	*Unknown*
Total	**100**	**57.8**	**0.8**	**2.3**	**2.4**	**10.1**	**3.8**	**22.8**
Urban	**100**	46.9	0.4	4.0	4.1	14.8	4.8	25.0
Non-urban	**100**	69.1	1.1	0.6	0.6	5.3	2.7	20.5

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

Table 12

Population by mother tongue and type of settlement (structural ratio), Slovenia, 2002 Census

Type of settlement	*Total*	*Slovene*	*Italian*	*Hungarian*	*Romany*	*Croatian*	*Bosnian*	*Serbian*	*Serbo-Croatian*	*Other*	*Unknown*
Total	**100**	**87.7**	**0.2**	**0.4**	**0.2**	**2.8**	**1.6**	**1.6**	**1.9**	**1.0**	**2.7**
Urban	**100**	81.9	0.3	0.2	0.2	3.9	2.8	2.8	3.1	1.5	3.4
Non-urban	**100**	93.8	0.1	0.6	0.2	1.5	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.4	1.9

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

10. Activity and unemployment

45. The data on the number of persons in employment and unemployed citizens over the past 6 years reflect the situation in the labour market caused by a long-term economic crisis, resulting in the fast growing percentage of unemployed and a decline in the number of jobs. Between the end of 2008 and the end of 2013, the number of persons in employment declined by almost 90,000, of whom 65,000 were men and 25,000 women. During this period, the highest number of redundancies was recorded in the construction (42%) and manufacturing sectors (18%), while the number of persons in paid employment increased the most in the professional, scientific and technical sectors.

Table 13

Population by activity, 2008–2013, Slovenia, 31 December

	2008	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*	*2013*
Total						
Active population	946,491	941,327	928,996	930,065	911,009	915,338
Persons in employment	880,252	844,655	818,975	817,311	792,948	791,323
Persons in paid employment	790,231	752,444	730,522	723,042	699,898	694,370
Self-employed persons	90,021	92,211	88,453	94,269	93,050	96,953
Registered unemployed persons	66,239	96,672	110,021	112,754	118,061	124,015
Males						
Active population	531,542	525,606	515,633	511,624	498,704	498,292
Persons in employment	498,978	475,402	456,823	452,062	435,493	433,657
Persons in paid employment	434,384	409,680	393,550	386,354	371,041	368,194
Self-employed persons	64,594	65,722	63,273	65,708	64,452	65,463
Registered unemployed persons	32,564	50,204	58,810	59,562	63,211	64,635

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Females						
Active population	414,949	415,721	413,363	418,441	412,305	417,046
Persons in employment	381,274	369,253	362,152	365,249	357,455	357,666
Persons in paid employment	355,847	342,764	336,972	336,688	328,857	326,176
Self-employed persons	25,427	26,489	25,180	28,561	28,598	31,490
Registered unemployed persons	33,675	46,468	51,211	53,192	54,850	59,380

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

46. In 2013, the labour force (active population according to the labour force survey) amounted to 1,008,000 persons (546,000 men and 462,000 women), with 906,000 employed (495,000 men and 411,000 women) and 102,000 unemployed (52,000 men and 50,000 women). After 2000, the situation in the labour market was most favourable in 2007 and 2008 as a result of significant economic growth in previous years. In 2008, the unemployment rate reached the lowest level after independence, with the registered unemployment rate amounting to 6.7 and the percentage of survey unemployment rate 4.4. The situation in the labour market has deteriorated since 2008 as a result of the economic crisis; the survey unemployment rate increased to 10.1% in 2013, and continues to grow in 2014.

Table 14
Unemployment rate, Slovenia, 2008–2013

	Registered unemployment rate (%)	*Unemployment rate according to the Labour Force Survey (ILO) (%)*
2008	+6.7	+4.4
2009	+9.1	+5.9
2010	+10.7	+7.3
2011	+11.8	+8.2
2012	+12.0	+8.9
2013	+13.1	+10.1

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

47. The average monthly gross wage increased from EUR 1,391 in 2008 to EUR 1,525 in 2012.

11. Household expenditure

48. Between 2005 and 2010, total household expenditure has grown by 3% per year on average. While in 2005, households spent EUR 14,956 on average on basic necessities, the amount rose to EUR 17,420 in 2010. In 2012, the amount fell to EUR 16,797.

49. In the period in question, the largest share of household expenditure was allocated to transport (18% on average); between 2005 and 2010, the percentage fell, but rose again in 2012, peaking at 19.3%. This is followed by expenditure on food and non-alcoholic beverages, which fell from 16.6% in 2005 to 16.1% in 2009, but started to increase again in 2010, reaching 16.4% in 2012. By contrast, an increase was recorded in expenditure on housing, rising from 12.1% in 2005 to 15.6% in 2012.

50. A small share of household expenditure is allocated to education and health. In the period in question, no significant changes were recorded regarding expenditure on education, which comprised, on average, 1% of total household expenditure. By contrast, expenditure on health grew from 1.7% in 2005 to 2.7% in 2012.

Table 15
Structure of household expenditure, Slovenia, 2004–2012

	2005	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2012**
Household expenditure (EUR)	14956	15332	15908	17482	17142	17420	16797
Food and non-alcoholic beverages	16.6	16.6	16.5	16.4	16.1	16.3	16.4
Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.1	2.2	2.1
Clothing and footwear	8.0	8.0	8.1	8.3	7.8	7.5	6.7
Household	12.1	12.4	12.8	13.0	13.6	13.8	15.6
Furnishing and household equipment	7.3	7.6	7.8	7.8	7.9	7.3	5.4
Health	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.2	2.5	2.6	2.7
Transport	19.2	18.7	18.1	17.2	17.1	16.7	19.3
Communications	5.0	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.7
Recreation and culture	10.9	10.7	10.6	10.9	10.9	11.3	10.0
Education	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.1
Hotels, cafes and restaurants	4.7	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.5	3.6
Miscellaneous goods and services	11.0	11.4	11.4	11.4	11.6	11.6	11.5

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

* Since the research methods were amended in 2011, the data for 2011 are not available.

12. Poverty and social inclusion

51. In 2012, the risk-of-poverty rate in Slovenia was 13.5%, with 271,000 people living below the poverty threshold (124,000 men and 147,000 women). The difference in the risk-of-poverty rate between men and women was 2.1 percentage points (12.5 for men and 14.6 for women), with the differences growing significantly after 60 years of age. Almost a third of women aged 75 years or more were living below the poverty threshold, while men of the same age group were only 12%. The poverty threshold was EUR 7,273 annually or EUR 606 monthly per equivalent adult household member.

Table 16
Poverty threshold, Slovenia, 2005–2012

	2005	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
Annual poverty threshold (EUR)	5,278	5,590	5,944	6,536	7,118	7,042	7,199	7,273
Monthly poverty threshold (EUR)	440	466	495	545	593	587	600	606

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

52. In 2005, the risk-of-poverty rate started to decline, reaching the lowest value before the start of the economic crisis (according to the Statistics on Income and Living Conditions data from 2008 included in the research for 2009). With the crisis, the rate started to increase again, culminating in 2011 (according to the Statistics on Income and Living Conditions data from 2009 included in the research for 2010). Due to the crisis, the poverty threshold also increased. Between 2005 and the year before the crisis, it continued

to increase, declining slightly in the first year of the crisis, then starting to rise again, peaking in 2012.

53. In 2012, the risk-of-poverty rate was higher in the eastern (16.1%) than in the western part of the country (10.7%). In eastern Slovenia, 167,000 persons lived in households disposing of an income below the poverty threshold, while in the western part there were 104,000 such persons. Between 2008 and 2012, the poverty rate in eastern Slovenia was consistently higher than in the western part of the country; however, the gap is closing. In 2008, the difference amounted to 7 percentage points and 5.4 in 2012.

Table 17
The risk-of-poverty rate before and after social transfers, Slovenia, 2005–2012

	2005	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
Risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers (% of persons)	12.2	11.6	11.5	12.3	11.3	12.7	13.6	13.5
Risk-of-poverty rate before social transfers, except pensions (% of persons)	25.9	24.2	23.1	23.0	22	24.2	24.2	25.2
Risk-of-poverty rate before social transfers, including pensions (% of persons)	42.2	40.7	39.7	38.5	37.8	39.9	40.2	41.9

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

54. Social transfers, including pensions, are essential for reducing poverty. If these transfers (family and social assistance benefits) were not included in income, the risk-of-poverty rate would almost double, amounting to 25.2% (30.0% in the eastern and 20.1% in the western part of the country). If the income did not include pensions, this rate would further increase to 41.9%.

55. Income inequality is relatively low and stable. In 2012, the Gini coefficient was the same as in 2006 (23.7%), while the lowest level (22.7%) was recorded before the economic crisis (according to the Statistics on Income and Living Conditions data from 2008 included in the research for 2009).

Table 18
Gini coefficient, Slovenia, 2005–2012

	2005	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
Gini coefficient	23.8	23.7	23.2	23.4	22.7	23.8	23.8	23.7

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

13. Education

56. Pre-school education is a non-compulsory part of Slovenia's education system. All pre-school children are equally eligible to enrol in pre-school education. Pre-school education is provided by public and private institutions to children aged 11 months to 6 years, when they begin compulsory education. Pre-school education is guided by a national policy and a framework programme, and pre-school education providers may organise their services in the form of the "education-and-care" families, i.e. a type of kindergarten organisation at a childcare provider's home; also, they may provide occasional child-care at home.

57. The ensuring of pre-school education is a key responsibility of municipalities, which establish and finance pre-school institutions.

58. In Slovenia, the number of pre-schoolers increases annually: 20 years ago, half of pre-school-aged children attended a preschool, and as many as three quarters in 2013. Also, in the academic year 2013/14, pre-school was attended by more than 90% of children aged 4 or over, and according to the Education and Training 2020 framework, 95% are projected by 2020. In the past few years, an increase has also been recorded in the number of the youngest children, aged 1 to 2 years, attending pre-school. In the academic year 2013/14, pre-school was attended by as many as 42% of all children aged 1 year and 66% of children aged 2 years. Slovenia's network of public pre-school institutions is well developed, with over 95% of all pre-schoolers included; in addition, an increase has been recorded in recent years in the number of private pre-school education providers, in general co-financed from public funds. In the academic year 2013/14, 3.7% of all Slovenia's pre-schoolers attended private preschool institutions. Approximately 8 children on average are supervised by a preschool teacher and an assistant.

Table 19

Children enrolled in preschool education (in %) by age, Slovenia, 2008/09–2013/14

Academic year	***Total***	*1 year*	*2 years*	*3 years*	*4 years*	*5 years*	*6 years*
2008/09	**70.2**	38.5	60.4	77.3	85.6	89.9	4.3
2009/10	**71.9**	39.2	64.7	80.6	87.0	90.0	5.1
2010/11	**74.0**	41.4	65.8	82.8	88.9	90.7	6.3
2011/12	**75.9**	41.7	69.8	84.9	89.4	92.5	5.8
2012/13	**75.6**	42.4	68.2	84.3	89.0	90.7	5.0
2013/14	**75.0**	42.1	66.1	82.9	88.7	90.0	5.3

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

59. The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia states that basic education is compulsory and financed from public funds. All children who are residents of the Republic of Slovenia have the right to receive basic education under equal conditions. Children start elementary school at the age of 6 and follow a national nine-year curriculum; in the ninth grade, children are aged 14, and they finish elementary school at the age of 15. In Slovenia, basic education is provided by public and private elementary schools; there are only 3 private schools, which are co-financed from public funds. Despite the fact that basic education is compulsory, the elementary school net enrolment rate (the share of children aged 6 to 14 in this age group) is not 100% for several reasons, e.g. the postponement of compulsory schooling for a year for children who are not sufficiently mature to begin basic education; also, these figures take no account of home-schooled children and children with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities living in residential facilities or receiving special education in educational institutions for children with special needs.

60. In the last five years, the share of children who failed to complete the final grade of elementary school within the legal time limits and ended their basic education without obtaining a certificate of completed elementary school ranged from 1.1 to 1.4% in regular elementary schools; in the same period, this share was much higher in the population with special needs who followed special education programmes, ranging between 2.5 and 6.9%. Nevertheless, the majority of students who fail to complete basic education within the required time limit subsequently join adult basic education programmes and complete them.

61. The student/teacher ratio shows the total number of elementary school children per total number of teachers (the two numbers are given as the equivalent of a full-time student or teaching load). In the last five years, a teacher was responsible for 12 students on average, i.e. 16 in the first and second cycles and 8 in the third cycle.

Table 20
Number of students per teacher, basic education, Slovenia, 2008/09–2012/13

Academic year	*Elementary school, total*	*1st and 2nd cycle*	*3rd cycle*
2007/08	12.4	16.2	9.2
2008/09	12.4	17.2	8.1
2009/10	12.3	16.6	8.2
2010/11	12.2	16.4	8.1
2011/12	12.3	16.3	8.2
2012/13	12.5	16.4	8.4

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

62. In Slovenia, upper secondary education is non-compulsory, but free for all young people. Despite its non-compulsory character, most young people who complete compulsory basic education enrol in secondary education. In the academic year 2013/14, the secondary education enrolment rate was 92% of all young people aged 15–18.

63. Most pupils, i.e. 45% in 2013/2014, enrol in programmes of upper secondary technical education. 38% of all students enter upper secondary general education, and only 16% enrol in short vocational or vocational upper secondary programmes. Women predominate in upper secondary general education, and men in short vocational and vocational upper secondary education.

64. Early school leavers refers to the share of persons aged 18–24 who only have the basic level of education and who have not received any education or training in the last four weeks. In Slovenia, there are few early school leavers, less than 5% (based on a calculation based on the data collected through a labour force survey).

Table 21
Youth enrolled in upper secondary education by type of education, Slovenia, 2008/09–2013/14

		Type of education			
Academic year	*Upper-secondary education enrolment*	*Short vocational*	*Upper-secondary vocational*	*Upper-secondary technical*	*Upper-secondary general*
2008/09	87.5	1.3	15.0	42.4	41.3
2009/10	88.6	1.2	14.5	43.2	41.1
2010/11	88.7	1.1	14.5	43.7	40.7
2011/12	90.5	1.1	14.7	44.1	40.1
2012/13	90.1	1.0	14.9	44.4	39.7
2013/14	91.6	1.1	15.2	45.3	38.4

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

65. In recent years, an increasing number of young people who completed upper secondary technical or general education have been enrolling in short-cycle higher education and higher education. Accounting for 35% of the age group 19–24 years in 2000, tertiary education students have gradually increased in number to almost 50% of this age group.

66. As a result, the number of tertiary education graduates is increasing every year, and has more than doubled in the last 15 years, accounting for over 20,000 students in 2011 and 2012 and almost 19,000 in 2013. The educational structure of the population is improving every year: in 2013, 34.4% of the Slovenian population aged 30–34 completed tertiary education (in the 2002 Census, the share was 20.8%), with females predominating, and accounting for 45.6%, while males lagged behind at 24.4%.

Table 22
Tertiary education students and graduates, Slovenia, 2000–2012

		Tertiary education enrolment, age group 19–24 (%)			*Graduates*	
Academic year	*Number of students*	***Total***	*Males*	*Females*	***Total***	*Females (%)*
2000	91,494	**35.3**	28.8	42.2	**11,497**	42.8
2008	114,391	**48.1**	38.0	59.1	**17,221**	62.8
2009	114,873	**48.9**	38.9	59.9	**18,103**	61.8
2010	107,134	**49.1**	36.5	62.7	**19,694**	61.8
2011	104,003	**49.2**	40.3	58.7	**20,461**	60.3
2012	97,706	**48.6**	40.3	57.4	**20,596**	60.3
2013	90,622	**48.0**	39.9	56.6	**18,774**	61.1

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.

14. Gross domestic product and gross domestic income

67. Slovenia is a small and open economy, greatly depending on exports. The economic and financial crisis, characterised by a massive and rapid decrease in global trade flows, reduced the Slovenian exports in 2009 by 16.1%, and the gross domestic product (GDP) by 7.9%. The decrease was followed by two years of modest economic growth (2010: 1.3%; 2011: 0.7%), while exports remained the main factor of economic recovery. However, even exports started to slow down in 2011. In 2012, GDP in Slovenia again recorded a substantial fall, by 2.5%. The fall was a result of the deteriorating situation in the international environment, continued decrease of investment consumption and the measures adopted to stabilise public finances, which caused the decrease of the final consumption. After two years of faster growth, combined with the decline of economic activity in the main trading partners in the Eurozone, the exports increased only by 0.3%, with its share amounting to 76.1% of GDP in 2012.

68. The GDP again contracted in 2013 (-1.1%), lagging behind the pre-crisis level by approximately one tenth. The exports remained the only factor that contributed positively to economic activity, and its growth strengthened in conjunction with economic recovery in the EU (2.9%). The growth of imports was also noted, which is due to the slowing decline of domestic consumption. The fall in gross investment in fixed assets (-2.5%) and the fall in private consumption (-2.7%) were lower than in the previous year, while the government spending decreased even further (-2.0%).

69. The share of exports in goods and services in GDP peaked in 2013 (78.1% of GDP), whereas the share of imports in GDP remained at the similar level as in the previous two years (71.5%). A surplus in trade in goods and services with foreign countries was recorded for a third consecutive year, amounting to EUR 2,353 million (6.7% of GDP), whereas the surplus on the current account was EUR 2,279 million (6.5% of GDP).

70. In 2013, Slovenia's GDP at current prices amounted to EUR 35,275 million, or to EUR 17,128 per capita[1], a similar value as in 2007. This year, the gross domestic income (GDI) amounted to EUR 35,068 million, or to EUR 17,027 per capita[2].

Table 23
GDP and GDI, Slovenia, 1995–2013

Year	*GDP (in million EUR)*	*GDP growth rate in %*	*GDP per capita (EUR)**	*GDI (in million EUR)*
1995	10,357		8,151	10,448
1996	11,947	3.6	8,488	12,031
1997	13,608	5.0	9,100	13,654
1998	15,076	3.5	9,785	15,115
1999	16,922	5.3	10,558	16,976
2000	18,566	4.3	10,908	18,577
2001	20,765	2.9	11,502	20,809
2002	23,195	3.8	12,316	23,066
2003	25,195	2.9	12,942	25,002
2004	27,165	4.4	13,645	26,859
2005	28,722	4.0	14,356	28,500
2006	31,045	5.8	15,464	30,696
2007	34,594	7.0	17,135	33,876
2008	37,244	3.4	18,420	36,273
2009	35,420	-7.9	17,349	34,823
2010	35,485	1.3	17,320	35,028
2011	36,150	0.7	17,610	35,759
2012	35,319	-2.5	17,172	34,931
2013	35,275	-1.1	17,128	35,069

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.
* At current prices and at current rates.

15. Foreign trade and foreign direct investment

71. The rate of international trade cooperation of the Slovenian economy has been recovering since the large decline in 2009; in 2013, the average share of international trade compared to GDP reached the highest level so far. According to information provided by the Statistical Office, the total value of Slovenia's exports in 2013 amounted to EUR 21.6 billion, and imports to EUR 22.1 billion. In 2013[3], Slovenia exported most of the

[1] USD 22,748 per capita (at current prices and at current rates).
[2] USD 22,615 per capita (at current prices and at current rates).
[3] Detailed information is available only for the first eleven months.

goods to the EU-28 (75.2% of the total value of exports), particularly to the countries of the Eurozone. Slovenia's major trading partners in terms of exports included Germany (20.9%), Italy (11.5%), Austria (8.5%), Croatia (6.6%), and France (5.4%). An important share of exports outside the EU is also accounted for by countries of the former Yugoslavia (7.2%, without Croatia) and Russia (4.6%). The data indicate that regional orientation of the Slovenian exports in goods had only seen moderate changes since the beginning of the crisis. The share of exports to the EU and the countries of the former Yugoslavia decreased, while the exports to other countries increased.

72. In 2012, the share of Slovenia in the global market of goods, which has been steadily decreasing since 2008, was lower by 22% than before the start of the crisis in 2007. The largest share on the global markets was lost on markets outside of the EU, while the total decrease in the EU-27 was lower, amounting to 6%. The share among the major trading partners in 2012 surpassed the level before the crisis only in Germany and in Croatia. The first data for 2013 indicate a positive shift, as the market share in the global market increased in the first nine months as a result of growing market shares in most important trading partners both in the EU and beyond.

73. At the end of 2012[4], inward foreign direct investments (inward FDI) amounted to EUR 11.7 billion, a decrease by EUR 46 million compared to the year before[5]. Most foreign investors in Slovenia were from the EU (82.7% of all inward direct investments), mostly from Austria (47.8%), Switzerland (8.7%), Italy (7.0%), Germany (6.6%), and France (5.3%). Most investments were made in services, predominantly financial services (40.1% of all inward direct investments), followed by processing industries (24.4% of investments). According to the latest data (for the first nine months of 2013), the inflow of inward FDI in Slovenia was estimated to fall for the second year in a row. Consequently, Slovenia remains among the EU member States with very low levels of inward investments compared to GDP (31.1% of GDP; at the end of 2012, 33.2% of GDP). Following the divestiture in 2010 and 2012, the positive shift in outward FDI in 2013 was merely symbolic. At the end of 2012, outward FDI accounted for EUR 5.6 billion, with 70.3% of the total funds earmarked for the countries of the former Yugoslavia.

Table 24
Trade balance, Slovenia, 2000–2013

Year	*Exports (in million EUR)*	*Imports (in million EUR)*	*Trade balance (in million EUR)*	*Import to export ratio (in %)*
2000	8,132.4	9,407.7	-1,275.3	86.4
2001	9,379.0	10,282.3	-903.3	91.2
2002	10,352.0	10,929.6	-577.6	94.7
2003	11,008.1	11,938.5	-930.4	92.2
2004	12,744.7	14,100.5	-1,355.9	90.4
2005	14,396.7	15,804.3	-1,407.6	91.1
2006	16,754.3	18,338.2	-1,583.9	91.4
2007	19,405.9	21,507.6	-2,101.7	90.2
2008	19,808.2	23,045.7	-3,237.5	86.0

[4] Latest data for the entire year.

[5] Net increase in equity capital amounted to EUR 329 million, negative reinvested earnings EUR 322 million and net decrease in loan capital EUR 53 million.

Year	Exports (in million EUR)	Imports (in million EUR)	Trade balance (in million EUR)	Import to export ratio (in %)
2009	16,269.3	17,275.9	-1,006.6	94.2
2010	18,639.3	20,100.6	-1,461.2	92.7
2011	20,999.3	22,555.1	-1,555.8	93.1
2012	21,060.7	22,077.7	-1,017.0	95.4
2013	21,602.6	22,143.7	-541.1	97.6

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

16. External debt

74. In 2013, gross external debt amounted to EUR 39.9 million or 110.9% of GDP, which is EUR 1.3 billion (2.1 percentage points) less than in 2012 and EUR 0.7 billion more than in 2008[6]. Last year's decrease was largely due to further deleveraging of commercial banks, which have been reducing their gross external debt since the beginning of the crisis (by more than EUR 11 billion since September 2008). Their share in the total gross external debt decreased from 45.6% in 2008 to one fifth in 2013. This also resulted in a decrease of the total non-guaranteed gross external debt (2013: 48.2%). On the other hand, due to the annual increase in the gross external debt of the general government sector (EUR 11.6 billion since September 2008), its share in the total gross external debt 2008-2013 increased from less than 10% to almost one third. This also caused an increase in the share of the total public and publicly guaranteed debt during this period, from one fourth to 51.8%.

Table 25
Gross external debt of Slovenia as at 31 December 2013

	Value (in million EUR)
Gross external debt	39,930
long-term debt	28,977
short-term debt	6,264
debt to related companies	4,689

Source: Bank of Slovenia

17. Inflation rate

75. As a result of coordinated economic policies, a stable price increase in the period 2005–2006 enabled Slovenia to adopt the euro at the beginning of 2007. Combined with the measures to prevent unjustified price increase, the adoption of the euro had a relatively low impact on inflation. However, in 2007 and the first half of 2008, it was accelerated due to external factors (increased prices of oil and non-energy raw materials). After four years of calmed growth, the inflation rose again in 2012, particularly as a consequence of economic policy measures (excise duty and one-time factors). In 2013 it was substantially reduced. Consumer prices increased only by 0.7%, which is much less than in 2012 (2.7%), despite a

[6] As regards GDP, the debt in 2008 amounted to 103.4%, the share in 2013 was higher as a result of a nominal GDP decrease in this period.

relatively high contribution of tax measures[7]. This is particularly due to further decline of economic activity, and with the deteriorated situation on the labour market. Similarly as in the last four years, inflation was mostly due to increased energy and food prices (together 0.7 percentage points); however, their contribution halved particularly owing to lower prices of raw materials on global markets as compared to the previous year. Having grown rapidly in the last two years mostly due to one-off factors, the price of services decelerated in 2013, contributing 0.2 percentage points to last year's inflation. The continued decline of economic activity also affected the trend in prices of other goods (particularly semi-durable goods), which recorded a fall last year (-0.2 percentage points). An international comparison based on harmonised consumer price index shows that the inflation fell in all EU member States last year, with four of them recording deflation. At the level of the entire Eurozone, inflation last year amounted to 0.8% and was lower than in Slovenia (0.9%).

Table 26
Inflation, Slovenia, 2000–2013

Year	*Inflation, in % (December/December)*	*Inflation, in % (average of the year)*
2000	8.9	8.9
2001	7.0	8.4
2002	7.2	7.5
2003	4.6	5.6
2004	3.2	3.6
2005	2.3	2.5
2006	2.8	2.5
2007	5.6	3.6
2008	2.1	5.7
2009	1.8	0.9
2010	1.9	1.8
2011	2.0	1.8
2012	2.7	2.6
2013	0.7	1.8

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia

B. Slovenia's Constitution, political structure and legislation

1. Constitutional framework

76. On the basis of the right to self-determination, recognised not only by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights but also the Constitution of the former Yugoslavia, the people of the Republic of Slovenia decided by an absolute majority in a plebiscite held on 23 December 1990 to establish an independent Slovenia. Following this decision, the Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia (the parliament), as the highest elected authority, on 25 June 1991 adopted the Basic Constitutional Charter on the Sovereignty and Independence of the Republic of Slovenia. The Yugoslav Army, not respecting the Charter

[7] According to IMAD, increased VAT rates, excise duties and other taxes contributed approximately 0.8 percentage points to inflation in 2013.

or the decision made by the Slovenian people in the 1991 plebiscite, launched an armed attack on Slovenia on 27 June 1991. Following an intervention by the European Community, a ceasefire was achieved ten days later, and in October 1991, the Yugoslav Army withdrew from Slovenia, which as early as the second half of 1991 had taken control of all Slovenian territory.

77. On 23 December 1991, the Slovenian Parliament adopted the new Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia[8], stipulating that Slovenia is a democratic republic and a State governed by the rule of law, and a social State, and that in Slovenia, power is vested in the people. Citizens exercise this power directly and through elections, consistent with the principle of the separation of the legislative, executive and judicial powers.

78. Human rights and fundamental freedoms are defined in the chapter Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Articles 14–65; the Constitution also specifies other rights: e.g. in chapter III, entitled Economic and Social Relations, Article 72 stipulates the right to a healthy living environment; Article 76 guarantees the freedom to establish, operate and join trade unions, and Article 77 guarantees employees the right to strike.

79. The Constitution also stipulates group or collective rights (e.g. in Article 64, the special rights of the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities in Slovenia).

2. The National Assembly and political parties

80. The legislative power is vested in parliament, i.e. the National Assembly; its 90 deputies are elected by universal, equal, direct and secret voting for a 4-year term based on the principle of proportional representation, with a 4% threshold required. In compliance with the Constitution, the autochthonous Italian and Hungarian national communities are directly represented in the National Assembly. The President of the National Assembly is elected by a majority vote of all deputies. The deputies are representatives of all Slovenian people, and their parliamentary immunity means that no deputy of the National Assembly can be criminally liable for any opinion expressed or vote cast in National Assembly sessions or in its working bodies.

81. The National Assembly passes laws and takes other decisions and ratifies treaties by a majority of votes cast by the deputies present, except where a different type of majority is provided by the Constitution or by law. Laws may be proposed by the Government, any deputy or by at least 5,000 voters. The National Assembly may call a referendum on the entry into force of a law that it has adopted if so required by at least 40,000 voters. However, a referendum may not be called on laws on urgent measures to ensure the defence of the State, security, or the elimination of the consequences of natural disasters, laws on taxes, customs duties, and other compulsory charges, and on the law adopted for the implementation of the State budget, laws on the ratification of treaties, laws eliminating an unconstitutionality in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms or any other unconstitutionality. The National Assembly also has the power to declare war or a state of emergency, and to deploy the defence forces.

3. National Council

82. Slovenia also has a 40-member National Council comprised of four representatives of employers, four representatives of employees, four representatives of farmers, crafts and trades, and independent professions, six representatives of non-commercial fields, and

[8] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 33/1991-I, 42/1997, 66/2000, 24/2003, 69/2004, 68/2006 and 47/2013.

twenty-two representatives of local interests. Its members are elected for a five-year term by the elected representatives of special interest organisations and local communities. Among its other competences, the National Council is involved in the legislative process (proposes legislation; may exercise a suspensive veto), and may partially be seen as the second chamber of the parliament.

4. The President of the Republic

83. The President of the Republic represents the Republic of Slovenia and is the commander-in-chief of its defence forces. The President is elected in direct, general elections by secret ballot for a five-year term and may be elected for a maximum of two consecutive terms.

84. The President of the Republic calls elections to the National Assembly; promulgates laws; proposes candidates for Prime Minister to the National Assembly; issues instruments of ratification of treaties; appoints and recalls ambassadors and envoys of the Republic, and accepts the letters of credence of foreign diplomatic representatives; appoints State officials where so provided by law; confers decorations and honorary titles; and performs other duties determined by the Constitution. If required by the National Assembly, the President must express his or her opinion on an individual issue. If the National Assembly cannot convene due to a state of emergency or war, the President, on the proposal of the Government, may issue decrees with the force of law.

5. The Government

85. The President of the Republic proposes a candidate for Prime Minister to the National Assembly, who is then elected by a majority vote of all deputies. Before taking office, the Prime Minister, the President of the Republic and all the ministers swear before the National Assembly to uphold the Constitution, to act according to his or her conscience, and to do all in his or her power for the benefit of Slovenia. The Prime Minister is responsible for ensuring the unity of the political and administrative direction of the Government, and coordinates the work of ministers. The ministers are appointed and dismissed by the National Assembly on the proposal of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister's coordinating and technical tasks are carried out by the Prime Minister's Office and the Secretary-General's Office. The Government may establish additional government offices responsible for specific technical fields.

86. The duties of State administration are performed directly by the ministries. However, by law, certain duties of State administration may be performed by self-governing communities, enterprises, other organisations, and individuals vested with public authority.

6. Municipalities

87. As guaranteed by the Constitution, the people of Slovenia exercise local self-government in municipalities and other local communities. The municipality, as the basic unit of local self-government, comprises a settlement or several settlements bound together by the common needs and interests of its residents. Smaller units may be organised within municipalities: district communities in urban municipalities, and local or village communities in other municipalities. A municipality is established by law following a referendum by which the will of the residents in a given territory is determined. In accordance with the Constitution, local self-government may also be exercised at the level of regions, which are established by a law. However, no region has yet been established in Slovenia.

88. The municipality manages local affairs of public interest as defined by law and performs duties which may be regulated autonomously by the municipality. The municipality is financed from its own funds and funds divided between municipalities (personal income tax). A municipality unable to provide for the performance of its duties defined by law receives solidarity funding from other municipalities, and if necessary, funding from the national budget.

89. The highest municipal decision-making body is the municipal council, whose members are elected in direct elections. The municipality is represented and governed by a mayor, also elected in direct elections. The mayor is responsible for the municipal administration and the implementation of decisions made by the municipal council.

90. In April 2014, Slovenia had 212 municipalities, of which 11 urban municipalities.

7. The judiciary

91. The third branch of power is the judiciary. Judicial power is wielded by judges. In the discharge of their judicial duties, judges are independent and bound only by the Constitution and the law. The office of judge is permanent. Judges are appointed by the National Assembly on the proposal of the Judicial Council. The majority of members of the Judicial Council are elected by judges from among their own number, and the remaining members by the National Assembly on the proposal of the President of the Republic from among professors of law, lawyers, and other legal experts. The organisation and jurisdiction of courts are determined by law. Extraordinary courts may not be established in Slovenia, nor may military courts be established in peacetime. Regular courts are courts of general jurisdiction. The Slovenian judicial system also includes courts with specialised jurisdiction, such as labour and social courts and the administrative court.

8. The Constitutional Court

92. The Constitutional Court is the highest constitutional authority for the protection of constitutionality, legality, and human rights and fundamental freedoms.

93. As stipulated by the Constitution, the Constitutional Court decides on:

- The conformity of laws and other regulations with the Constitution, ratified treaties and general principles of international law;
- The conformity of executive regulations and local community regulations with the law;
- Constitutional complaints arising from violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms by individual acts;
- Jurisdictional disputes between the State and local communities and between local communities themselves, between courts and other State authorities, and between the National Assembly, the President of the Republic and the Government;
- The unconstitutionality of the acts and activities of political parties;
- Appeals against decisions of the National Assembly confirming the election of its members; and
- The impeachment of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the ministers.

94. In the treaty ratification procedure, the Constitutional Court issues an opinion on the conformity of a treaty with the Constitution.

95. By law, the Constitutional Court has the authority to decide on appeals against decisions of the National Council not to confirm the election of its members, review the constitutionality of a referendum question, and determine whether a decision of the National Assembly not to call a referendum is substantiated.

96. It entirely or partially abrogates unconstitutional laws and abrogates or abrogates *ab initio*, with *ex tunc* effects, unconstitutional or unlawful executive regulations and local community regulations. The Constitutional Court may, until a final decision is taken, stay the implementation of the challenged regulations.

97. In general, it decides on constitutional complaints after all legal remedies have been exhausted. If it discovers a human rights violation, it may abrogate *ab initio* or abrogate individual acts and remand the case to the competent court or another body to decide thereon. If all the conditions provided for by law are fulfilled, the Constitutional Court may decide on the disputed right or freedom.

C. European Union membership

98. On 1 May 2004, Slovenia became an EU member State. EU institutions (Parliament, Council, and Commission) have far-reaching legislative powers. EU regulations and directives are either directly applicable in Slovenia or transposed into its national law. In decision making, Slovenian courts are bound by EU law, and must interpret national legislation in conformity with it. Disputes arising from the interpretation of EU treaties and law are settled by the Court of Justice of the European Union. Also, the courts of the Republic of Slovenia can seek advice from the Court of Justice when in doubt about the interpretation of an EU law. The Court of Justice also deals with cases brought by individuals and legal and other entities from Slovenia.

II. General legal framework for the exercise and protection of human rights

A. National legal framework for the protection of human rights

99. In Slovenia, the following bodies have jurisdiction in areas affecting human rights:

- All judicial bodies, i.e. all courts of general jurisdiction and specialised courts, which decide on the rights and obligations of an individual or charges against an individual;
- Other bodies of the judiciary, such as State prosecutor's offices, which decide on the prosecution of individuals, and correctional institutions;
- All bodies of the State administration when they decide on the rights, obligations and legal entitlements of individuals in administrative affairs;
- Other public authority bodies which, by virtue of their statutory power, may decide on the rights, obligations or legal entitlements of individuals (such as pension and disability insurance institutes, health insurance institutes, employment services and other institutes);

- The police, who perform their tasks and exercise their powers in order to ensure the security of individuals and the community, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the enhancement of the rule of law".

100. Any person maintaining that any of his or her rights have been violated may request that the case be heard in court. Where a person's rights have been violated in court proceedings or by a State body or public authority body, he or she is guaranteed the right of appeal and the right to judicial review, depending on whether criminal, civil, administrative, or other proceedings have been instituted. A person whose rights have been violated may request judicial protection against administrative decisions (administrative dispute) under the conditions and in the manner determined by the Administrative Dispute Act, provided no judicial protection in the matter is accorded by law. If a human right or fundamental freedom had been violated through a certain action, the person affected who has (as a general rule) exhausted all ordinary remedies before the competent court may lodge a constitutional complaint with the Constitutional Court.

101. The Constitution guarantees that any person unjustly convicted of a criminal offence or deprived of liberty without due cause has the right to rehabilitation and compensation, both material and non-material. The relevant conditions and procedures are stipulated in the Criminal Procedure Act. The State must compensate such persons. Victims of criminal offences may obtain damages from the perpetrator through criminal proceedings or private action. If damage has been caused by an official in the performance of his or her duties, the injured party may demand compensation directly from the State.

102. The Constitution does not stipulate only the human rights and freedoms of individuals, but also the mechanisms available to them for the protection of their rights. These include:

- Right to judicial protection: everyone has the right to have any decision regarding his rights, duties, and any charges brought against him made without undue delay by an independent, impartial court constituted by law (Article 23);
- Right to legal remedy: everyone is guaranteed the right to appeal (Article 25);
- Right to compensation for damage: everyone has the right to compensation for damage caused through unlawful actions in connection with the performance of any function or other activity by a person or authority performing such function or activity within a State or local community authority or as a bearer of public authority (Article 26);
- Right to constitutional complaint before the Constitutional Court.

103. The human rights instruments provided for by the Constitution are detailed in a number of laws. In the first instance, these are procedural laws, such as the Criminal Procedure Act, Minor Offences Act, Civil Procedure Act, General Administrative Procedure Act, and Civil Enforcement Act. These determine in which cases, in what manner, under what conditions and by which procedure anyone whose rights have been violated may have recourse to individual human rights instruments. Apart from these procedural acts, numerous other acts regulate individual human rights, in particular social and economic rights, implementation methods and legal instruments for individuals to exercise their rights.

104. The Constitution stipulates that human rights are exercised directly on a constitutional basis, and the method of exercising them may be regulated by law whenever

[a] Police Tasks and Powers Act, Article 1, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 15/2013.

the Constitution so provides or where this is necessary due to the particular nature of an individual right (Article 15, paragraphs 1 and 2). Hence, human rights instruments provided in the Constitution may also be implemented directly on the basis of the Constitution itself. A third of constitutional provisions concern human rights and fundamental freedoms. The general principle of equality and specific constitutional provisions are defined in greater detail in individual laws, particularly the Human Rights Ombudsman Act[10], Act Implementing the Principle of Equal Treatment[11], Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act[12], Family Violence Act[13], and Personal Data Protection Act[14], in order for these rights and freedoms to be effectively guaranteed and exercised. Human rights are also stipulated by, or implemented through, certain statutory provisions in different areas of legal regulation, i.e. in protective laws guaranteeing the human rights of individuals with special needs or of members of vulnerable social groups, as well as in a number of other laws. In order to provide for genuine equality, the Constitution, the general act prohibiting discrimination and the act on gender equality explicitly stipulate special measures or positive discrimination in cases when derogations from the equal treatment principle are justified by lawful ends and the means to attain this goal are both adequate and necessary.

1. Human Rights Ombudsman

105. The legal basis for introducing a Human Rights Ombudsman in Slovenia is Article 159 of the Constitution, which stipulates that in order to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms in relation to State authorities, local self-government authorities, and bearers of public authority, the office of the ombudsman for the rights of citizens shall be established by law. Paragraph 2 allows for the establishment of special ombudsmen for particular fields, although the prevailing formula thus far has been only one ombudsman with a broad scope of competency.

106. The Human Rights Ombudsman Act was passed in December 1993, duties and competences of the Ombudsman being based on the classical Scandinavian model. The organisation and working methods and the areas of work, procedures and roles are determined in the rules of procedure of the Human Rights Ombudsman. In order to perform investigations and in that capacity to call witnesses for questioning, the Ombudsman has above all the statutory authority to obtain from the State and other bodies subject to monitoring any data without regard to the degree of confidentiality. At any time he or she may perform an inspection of any State body or institution that restricts personal freedom, e.g. psychiatric institutions. The Ombudsman does not have the authority to monitor the work of judges and courts except in cases of undue delay of procedures or clear abuse of power.

107. The Ombudsman, together with a petitioner, may lodge constitutional complaints of human rights violations with the Constitutional Court (Article 50 of the Constitutional Court Act). The Ombudsman may also initiate proceedings to review the constitutionality of regulations without first demonstrating legal interest, as is required of other bodies (Article 23a of the Constitutional Court Act).

108. The competences of the Human Rights Ombudsman are also stipulated by various other acts, such as the Integrity and Prevention of Corruption Act, Patient Rights Act,

[10] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 71/1993 (15/1994 – amended), 56/2002, and 109/2012.
[11] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 93/2007.
[12] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 59/2002 and 61/2007.
[13] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 17/2008.
[14] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 94/2007 – official consolidated text 1.

Defence Act, Consumer Protection Act, Environment Protection Act, Personal Data Protection Act, Criminal Procedure Act, State Prosecutor Act, Courts Act, Judicial Service Act, Equal Opportunities Act, Police Tasks and Powers Act, Rules on Service in the Slovene Army, Attorneys Act, Enforcement of Penal Sentences Act, Administrative Fees Act, Classified Information Act, Infertility Treatment and Procedures of Biomedically Assisted Procreation Act, Civil Servants Act, Public Sector Salary System Act, and Travel Documents Act.

109. Dealings with the Human Rights Ombudsman are confidential and free of charge to petitioners. The Ombudsman informs the public and the National Assembly of findings and measures adopted. The Ombudsman performs tasks by addressing petitions which may be lodged by anyone who believes that his or her human rights or fundamental freedoms have been violated by an act or action by a State, local or public authority. Having obtained the injured party's consent, the Ombudsman may also initiate a *proprio motu* procedure in cases of gross violations of human rights or fundamental freedoms or other irregularities. Pursuant to Article 9 of the Human Rights Ombudsman Act, the Ombudsman may also deal with more general issues relevant to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the legal certainty of citizens. According to this provision, the Ombudsman may also address systemic and topical issues which the petitioners may not have perceived.

110. The Act ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment stipulates that the national preventive mechanism is the Human Rights Ombudsman (see below for more detail).

111. The Ombudsman is elected by the National Assembly with a two-thirds majority of all votes, upon nomination by the President. Pursuant to the relevant act, the Ombudsman's term of office is six years, renewable for one term. The Ombudsman has no less than two and no more than four deputies, who are appointed by the National Assembly, upon nomination by the Ombudsman, for the same term of office.

2. Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

112. Following the reorganisation of the State administration on 1 April 2012, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs took over the remit and staff of the Office for Equal Opportunities and in 2013 was renamed the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Thus, the Ministry has become the competent authority for shaping gender equality policy and performs tasks defined in the Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and the Rules on internal organisation and jobs systematisation at the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Its main tasks include: (i) monitoring the situation of women and implementing their rights guaranteed by the Constitution, laws and international conventions; (ii) scrutiny of regulations, acts and measures adopted by the Government and ministries from the aspect of gender equality, participation in drafting such documents, and submission of proposals for measures concerning gender equality; (iii) drafting analyses, reports and other documents; (iv) examination of initiatives from women's organisations, groups and movements concerned with gender equality.

3. Advocate of the Principle of Equality

113. In 2005, the office of the Advocate for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (established in 2003 and tasked with examining cases of alleged gender discrimination) evolved into the Advocate of the Principle of Equality, who, apart from gender, deals with cases of alleged discrimination also on the basis of other personal circumstances (nationality, race or ethnic background, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation or other personal circumstance).

114. The Advocate of the Principle of Equality is vested with certain other powers pursuant to the Act Implementing the Principle of Equal Treatment. In accordance with Article 16, the Advocate, while considering a case, may order the legal entity where discrimination has allegedly occurred to apply appropriate measures and protect the discriminated person against victimisation or eliminate the consequences. Another novelty is the possibility of ceding the case to the competent inspection service (articles 20 and 21). Since 2012, the Advocate has worked under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

4. Coordinator for equal opportunities for women and men

115. The Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men introduced a new mechanism for the integration of the gender equality principle into government policies and its implementation and monitoring. Each ministry has appointed a coordinator for equal opportunities for women and men who deals with the implementation of tasks defined by law and collaborates with the competent authority for gender equality policy. The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities holds regular meetings with the coordinators to present the work, experience and problems related to gender equality.

5. Office for Religious Communities

116. The Office has been operating within the Ministry of Culture and carries out its tasks in the field of religious freedom stipulated by the Religious Freedom Act[15]. It monitors the position of religious communities; provides professional assistance; is competent for the registration procedure and keeps a register of religious communities; provides budgetary funds for co-financing social security payments of religious workers; organises discussions and meetings with representatives of religious communities, and participates in drafting regulations, other documents and measures concerning religious communities drafted by other authorities.

6. Office for National Minorities

117. The Office for National Minorities operates under the competence of the Prime Minister's Office. The basic provisions on the protection of national communities and the Roma community are set out in the Constitution, while more detailed provisions are included in legislation regulating various areas that in any way concerns the situation of the Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Roma community. The relevant ministries are responsible for the implementation of the provisions. With such a division of responsibilities, the main task of the Office for National Minorities is the overall monitoring of the implementation of legal provisions on the protection of national communities and the Roma community and of their practical effects, drawing attention to deficiencies, drafting proposals and initiatives for the Government and other State authorities, and preparing analyses and reports on wider issues of the protection of national communities and the Roma community, together with the line ministries.

7. Information Commissioner

118. The Information Commissioner Act[16] of 31 December 2005 established the Information Commissioner as an autonomous State body competent for access to public

[15] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 14/2007, 46/2010 – Constitutional Court Decision, 40/2012, and 100/2013.

[16] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 113/2005.

information and personal data protection. The Information Commissioner is appointed by the National Assembly on a proposal by the President for a five-year term of office.

119. The right to access to public information and the right to protection of personal data are considered fundamental human rights enshrined in articles 38 and 39 of the Constitution.

120. The Personal Data Protection Act[17] stipulates measures to prevent unlawful and unjustified encroachments on the data privacy of an individual in all relevant fields. It also stipulates that protection of personal data is guaranteed to every individual in the Republic of Slovenia, irrespective of citizenship or residence. The purpose of personal data protection is not to protect personal data as such, but to protect the rights of the individual to whom these data refer.

121. Personal data may be processed only if the processing is provided by statute or if the data controller has obtained written consent of the individual concerned. By virtue of this act, i.e. without an explicit legal basis in another act and without written consent of the individual concerned, legal or natural persons engaged in a public service or an activity in accordance with the statute regulating companies may process personal data in respect of individuals that have contractual relations, provided that the processing of personal data is necessary to fulfil a contract and for the exercise of contractual rights. The situation is different for State and local authorities and bearers of public authority, and they may process only such personal data as provided by statute. An individual whose personal data are processed on the basis of his or her written consent must be informed in advance in writing of the intended processing of data, their use and period of storage.

122. Pursuant to the Access to Public Information Act[18], public information is any information originating from the remit of public bodies, irrespective of its form or origin (and regardless of whether it was drawn up by a public body, or acquired from other persons), and not constituting an exception under the Act (personal data, classified data, business secrets, information acquired or drawn up for the purposes of criminal prosecution or court proceedings, etc.). A broad range of bodies are required to provide public information by law: all State and local authorities, public law entities, bearers of public authority, and public service providers. The amended Act, which entered into force in April 2014, extended the range of these bodies to include all companies and other business entities subject to dominant influence by the State, municipalities or other entities of public law. The Act is intended to ensure that the work of the authorities is public and open, and to enable natural persons and legal entities to exercise their rights to acquire public information from any liable authority holding the information pertaining to its remit. Pursuant to the Act, the authorities must furthermore endeavour to inform the public of their work to the greatest extent possible. Another purpose of the Act is to improve transparency and responsible conduct in managing public funds and the financial resources of business entities subject to dominant influence by entities of public law.

123. Statutory powers of the Information Commissioner:

- Deciding on an appeal against a decision whereby a body refuses or dismisses an applicant's request for access or violates the right to access or re-use of public information in some other way, and, in appeal procedures, also monitoring the implementation of the act regulating access to public information and the regulations deriving from the act;

[17] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 86/2004 and 67/2007.

[18] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 51/2006, 23/2014, and 50/2014.

- Monitoring the implementation of the Act and other regulations governing the protection or processing of personal data or the transfer of personal data from Slovenia;
- Carrying out other duties defined by these regulations;
- Deciding on an appeal when a data controller refuses an individual's request for data, extract, list, examination, confirmation, information, explanation, transcript or copy in accordance with the provisions of the act governing personal data protection;
- As the relevant authority imposing fines, it is competent to monitor the implementation of the Information Commissioner Act, the Access to Public Information Act (in terms of the appeal procedure), and the Personal Data Protection Act.

B. Treaties

124. Article 8 of the Constitution stipulates that laws and other regulations must comply with the generally accepted principles of international law and with treaties that are binding on Slovenia. Ratified and published treaties are applied directly. Slovenia respects the objectives and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international obligations assumed by succession or the conclusion of major international universal and regional instruments governing human rights. Within the adopted international contractual obligations for the protection of human rights, Slovenia is subject to oversight by the relevant bodies established under the treaties, and reports regularly on the human rights situation to them, holds open dialogue and implements their recommendations in good faith. A member State of the Council of Europe and the European Union, Slovenia is also bound by the conventions of the Council of Europe, the EU *acquis* and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union.

125. Slovenia has succeeded to or ratified the following universal human rights treaties:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1 July 1992), the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (18 May 1993) and the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aimed at the abolition of the death penalty (17 December 1993);
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1 July 1992);
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1 July 1992); Slovenia also made a declaration pursuant to article 14 allowing communications from individuals to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 August 2001);
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1 July 1992) and the optional protocol thereto (21 April 2004);
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (15 April 1993) and the optional protocol thereto (29 September 2006);
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1 July 1992), the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (15 July 2004) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (15 July 2004);

- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the optional protocol thereto (16 April 2008).

126. Additionally, Slovenia has ratified the following universal treaties: Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (22 November 2001), United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2 April 2004), the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air (15 April 2004). By ratifying the Protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Adoption of an Additional Distinctive Emblem (Protocol III), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the optional protocol thereto, and by signing the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, Slovenia fulfilled the obligations assumed upon announcing its candidacy for membership of the Human Rights Council in the 2007–2010 period. It was among the first countries to sign the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in September 2009.

127. The country has ratified and is party to 77 International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions, including all eight fundamental conventions. In December 2013, it ratified the Convention concerning the promotional framework for occupational safety and health (ILO Convention No. 187) and the Convention concerning Night Work (ILO Convention No. 171), which will enter into force in Slovenia in February 2015.

128. It has also ratified a number of Council of Europe conventions, together with the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms with protocols, allowing Slovenian citizens to lodge applications with the European Court of Human Rights, including Protocol No. 12[19] on the general prohibition of discrimination. In 2009, it ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.

C. Promoting and protecting human rights

1. Information and public awareness

129. In the late 1980s, Slovenia, then still part of Yugoslavia, witnessed concerted efforts by individuals and various non-governmental organisations to raise awareness of the significance of human rights among the general public and relevant State authorities; with the transition from a one-party State to a parliamentary democracy and a State of political pluralism after 1990, these efforts became even more extensive and institutionalised. Apart from various non-governmental organisations such as the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights and Amnesty International, the Council of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms was most active in these movements and contributed much to promoting human rights in Slovenia until 1994.

130. At present, many NGOs are active in Slovenia. In 2001, 27 NGOs established the CNVOS, a centre for the information, cooperation and development of NGOs, with a view to performing their work more successfully and pursuing their mission as an important part of Slovenian civil society, to achieving partnership and cooperation at the national and international levels, obtaining a more prominent position in society, raising public awareness of their importance and support for NGO development projects.

[19] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 46/2010

131. Today, the CNVOS acts as an association of NGOs, bringing together more than 600 societies and organisations from various fields: social protection, sports, culture, health, philanthropy, and volunteerism. The CNVOS actively represents the interests of the Slovenian non-governmental sector in dialogue with the Government, the National Assembly, and businesses.

132. The Human Rights Ombudsman has a key role in informing the public about violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Slovenia. The Ombudsman takes part in public debates, responds to urgent questions and draws attention to violations through media articles, annual reports, special reports, newsletter, press conferences, website, promotional material, etc. In recent years, the Ombudsman's Office has conducted several campaigns to promote human rights, especially children's rights. In addition, a publication was designed: a free newsletter entitled "The Ombudsman – How to Protect Your Rights". Its main aim is to educate people about their rights, show them ways to seek help and redress wrongs, thereby contributing to reducing violations. The first issue appeared on 10 December 2003, Human Rights Day. The quarterly newsletter is available at administrative units, hospitals, clinics, libraries, employment services, boarding schools and university residence halls, retirement homes, non-governmental organisations, social services centres, prisons, police stations, etc.

133. Several weekly and monthly publications are dedicated to the legal profession and practice, including *Pravnik* (Lawyer), *Pravna praksa* (Legal Practice), *Revija za kriminalistiko in kriminologijo* (Journal of Criminal Investigation and Criminology), *Penološki bilten* (Penology Bulletin), *Teorija in praksa* (Theory and Practice) and *Zbornik znanstvenih razprav* (Scientific Review), in which articles on the protection of human rights are published regularly.

134. Human rights education is included in learning objectives at all levels of education, and has been given a more prominent position in the renewed primary and secondary school curricula. A cross-curricular topic, human rights education is part of the flexible syllabus, with dedicated days, weeks and human rights events. It benefits from greater attention in teacher training, in public calls for school projects and in research activities; it also receives more funding from European structural funds.

135. At the international level, Slovenia is a supporter of progressive human rights policy by advocating the development of new standards and by applying and implementing existing international human rights standards, cooperating with representatives of civil society and regularly informing the public of its activities.

136. Through its website and the media, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regularly informs the Slovenian public of the fulfilment of obligations arising from international conventions, particularly by publishing all the reports to relevant United Nations and Council of Europe control mechanisms and their recommendations.

137. The Foreign Minister meets representatives of non-governmental organisations annually to present Slovenia's foreign policy activities in the field of human rights. Regular meetings on human rights and international development cooperation are held also at the working level. The Foreign Ministry also cooperates with civil society at all levels on raising the awareness of the Slovenian public of the importance of effectively tackling global challenges, such as climate change, water, migration, and sustainable development.

138. The Inter-departmental Commission on Human Rights, which coordinates reporting to international human rights control mechanisms, meets annually with representatives of civil society organisations. Two of its members represent these organisations.

2. Rule of law: implementing Constitutional Court decisions; court backlogs; trial without undue delay

139. The Constitutional Court is the supreme authority clarifying the provisions of the Constitution, the founding legal act of the State; its decisions must be respected and implemented by all State bodies and all natural persons and legal entities. At the end of 2013, the following Constitutional Court decisions remained unimplemented: four decisions on the non-conformity of laws, and two on the non-conformity of local community regulations with the Constitution. Some of these decisions are currently being implemented.

140. Article 23 of the Constitution stipulates that everyone has the right to have any decision regarding his rights, duties and any charges brought against him made without undue delay by an independent, impartial court constituted by law. The judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in *Lukenda v. Slovenia*[20] and the decision of the Constitutional Court No. U-I-65/05 (2005) oblige the State to establish conditions in which the right to trial without undue delay must be afforded. For this purpose, the Ministry of Justice drafted the "Lukenda Project" in 2005, which envisaged the elimination of systemic causes of court backlogs in a modern system. The project included a range of actions, from building the human resource capacity of courts to accelerated and more thorough computerisation of the judiciary. The entry into force of the Act Regulating the Protection of Right to Trial without Undue Delay[21] on 1 January 2007 was an important breakthrough, in respect of which the European Court of Human Rights ruled in 2007 that it contains effective legal remedies for the protection of the right to trial without undue delay in compliance with Article 6, paragraph 1, with reference to Article 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights[22].

141. The total number of backlogs at first and second instance courts of general jurisdiction as at 31 December 2013 was 174,299 cases, which is a 46% reduction compared with the situation before the entry into force of the Act, although stricter criteria were twice adopted.

Table 27
Court backlogs in courts of general jurisdiction of first and second instance

Courts[23]	*31.12.2006*	*31.12.2013*	*Reduction rate (31.12.2006–31.12.2013)*
Higher-instance	3,832	799	-79.15%
District	13,785	19,210	+39.35%
Local	305,565	154,290	-49.51%
Total	**323,182**	**174,299**	**-46.07%**

[20] ECHR Judgment No. 23032/02, 2005.

[21] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 49/2006.

[22] The Court ruled on this matter in the cases *Grzinčič v. Slovenia* (ECHR Judgment, Application No. 26867/02, 3 May 2007) and *Korenjak v. Slovenia* (ECHR Judgment, Application No. 463/03, 15 May 2007).

[23] All data include the number of court backlogs in minor offence cases, which were included in the regular court system only in 2005, while previously they were under the jurisdiction of a separate system of minor offence judges.

142. The term "court backlog" applies to pending court cases that have been filed with the court for over six months. It has to be emphasised that, since 2006, considerably stricter criteria have been adopted in the Court Rules (in 2009 and again in 2010), so the above data cannot be directly compared. If 2006 criteria for designating backlogs were still in place, the reduction would have been even greater; the data on the reduction in average disposition time are more relevant[24]). In 1998, this amounted to 14.1 months (422 days) for all court cases, while in 2013 it averaged 3.6 months (110 days) before all courts, showing Slovenia's vast progress in reducing the duration of court proceedings.

3. Right to life and the prohibition of torture

143. The Constitution stipulates as follows: human life is inviolable and there is no capital punishment in Slovenia (Article 17); no one may be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment (Article 18); respect for human personality and dignity shall be guaranteed in criminal and in all other legal proceedings, as well as during the deprivation of liberty and enforcement of punitive sanctions (Article 21, paragraph 1); and violence of any form against any person whose liberty has been restricted in any way is prohibited, as is the use of any form of coercion in obtaining confessions and statements (Article 21, paragraph 2).

144. Based on recommendations of the Committee against Torture, the 2008 Criminal Code[25] stipulated an independent criminal offence of torture (Article 265, renumbered Article 135a in the amended Criminal Code of 2011[26]) – in addition to the existing criminalisation of torture with regard to crimes against humanity (Article 101, item 6) and war crimes (Article 102, paragraph 1, item 2), where the legislator took into account the definition of torture in Article 1 of the Convention against Torture.

145. The Act ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment[27] stipulates that the national preventive mechanism shall be the Human Rights Ombudsman, exercising tasks and powers of the national preventive mechanism together with selected NGOs and organisations that gained humanitarian organisation status in Slovenia. Such monitoring, which has been in place since 2007, enhances effectiveness, frequency and professionalism in detecting and preventing torture and other forms of cruel treatment.

146. In order to pursue independent investigations of criminal offences of which police officers are suspected, a special department has been established within the newly-established Specialised State Prosecutor's Office, which has been operating in a different format since 1 November 2007. The department is exclusively responsible for prosecuting criminal offences committed by officials employed by the police and similar State enforcement authorities.

147. In 2013, police legislation was amended. The Police Act was replaced by the Police Tasks and Powers Act and the Police Organisation and Work Act. The former in particular provides different solutions to guarantee better respect for human rights in police procedures. A new element introduced in implementing regulations is included in the Rules

[24] According to the methodology used at the Ministry of Justice, the average disposition time is expressed in months and calculated using the Clark-Cappelletti index formula, which is also accepted by the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice – CEPEJ: (number of pending cases at the end of period / number of cases resolved during the relevant period) x number of months in the period.

[25] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 55/2008, 39/2009.

[26] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 91/2011.

[27] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 20/2006.

on Police Powers: the Police Tasks and Powers Act explicitly stipulates that the Rules must be issued by the Minister after obtaining a preliminary opinion from the Human Rights Ombudsman.

4. Freedom of expression

148. Pursuant to the Media Act[28], media activities in Slovenia are based on freedom of expression, the inviolability and protection of the human personality and dignity, the free flow of information, media openness to different opinions and beliefs and to diverse content, the autonomy of editors, journalists and other authors in creating programming in accordance with programme concepts and professional codes, and the personal responsibility of journalists, other authors and editors for the consequences of their work. Pursuant to the Media Act and the Audiovisual Media Services Act[29], the dissemination of programming that encourages national, racial, religious, sexual or any other inequality, or violence and war, or incites national, racial, religious, sexual or any other hatred and intolerance is prohibited. Certain articles of the two acts also refer to human rights protection.

149. The Media Act stipulates that advertising may not prejudice respect for human dignity, incite discrimination on the grounds of race, sex or ethnicity, or political or religious intolerance, encourage behaviour damaging to public health or safety or to the protection of the environment and the cultural heritage, give offence on the grounds of religious or political beliefs, or damage consumers' interests. A special right under the Act is the right to correction or reply, based on which any person has the right to demand that the responsible editor publish, free-of-charge, a correction to any report published that infringes on the person's rights or interests, or publish, free-of-charge, a reply denying allegations of facts and information in the published report with verifiable statements. In advertising, special provisions refer to children. Advertisements that target children or in which children appear may not contain scenes of violence, pornography or any other content that could damage their health or mental and physical development or otherwise have a negative effect on them. Advertising may not be morally or mentally prejudicial to children, may not encourage children to purchase products or services by exploiting their inexperience or credulity, may not encourage children to convince their parents or any other person to purchase products or services, and may not unjustifiably show children in dangerous situations.

150. With respect to the protection of human rights, the Audiovisual Media Services Act, which regulates television programmes and audiovisual media services (on demand), explicitly prohibits enticement to inequality and intolerance and prejudicing respect for human dignity. Particular attention is dedicated to the protection of children and adolescents from content that could be prejudicial to their physical, mental or moral development and to their protection in disseminating audiovisual commercial messages. Through audiovisual media services, children and adolescents must not be exposed to arbitrary or unlawful interference in their private life, family or home, or to unlawful attacks on their honour or reputation.

151. In the provisions dedicated to criminal offences against honour and reputation (articles 158–162), the Criminal Code includes aggravated forms of criminal offences when these have been committed through the press, radio, television or other means of public information or at a public assembly. The amended Criminal Code limits the liability of the

[28] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 110/2006 – official consolidated text, 69/2006, 36/2008, 77/2010, 87/2011, and 47/2012.

[29] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 87/2011.

responsible editor in such cases (the editor is liable only if the author remains unknown, if the information was published without the author's consent or if there are material or legal obstacles preventing the author's prosecution). The responsible editor is not liable in cases of a live broadcast of a show that could not have been prevented, and for content published on a web page allowing real-time comments without prior checks.

5. Freedom of conscience

152. Freedom of conscience is provided for by Article 41 of the Constitution, referring to religious beliefs as well as moral, philosophical and other convictions. Any individual may hold any religious or other convictions and may freely profess religious beliefs, or may not hold religious convictions, may not declare religious beliefs and in this regard is not obliged to declare him/herself. Any forcible declaration is an infringement of the individual's integrity and a denial of free declaration. As a result of this freedom, anyone has the right to be or not to be a member of any religious community, and should not be limited in becoming a member of, or leaving, a religious community.

153. The Religious Freedom Act governs and ensures the exercise of religious freedom, stipulates the register of churches and other religious communities, criteria, conditions and procedure for the registration of churches and other religious communities, and the rights of registered churches and other religious communities and their members. The Office for Religious Communities, which operates within the Ministry of Culture, holds consultations with representatives of churches and other religious communities on the topics of interest to religious communities, providing them with information about legislation, their rights and how to exercise them.

6. Right to equal treatment

154. Article 14 of the Constitution stipulates that everyone is guaranteed equal human rights and fundamental freedoms irrespective of national origin, race, sex, language, religion, political or other belief, wealth, birth, education, social status, disability or any other personal circumstance. Article 14, paragraph 2, stipulates that all are equal before the law. The equal protection of rights regulated in Article 22 also falls within the scope of the general principle of equality (equal protection of rights in any proceeding before a court or before other State authorities).

155. Gender equality is also provided by certain laws such as the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment Act, including individual provisions of various laws (e.g. the provision of the Criminal Code[20] criminalising the violation of equality as a criminal offence; the provision of the Employment Relationship Act[21] prohibiting discrimination; the provisions of procedural laws guaranteeing the equality of parties to criminal, civil, administrative, and tax proceedings).

156. The constitutional principle of equality is specified by the provisions of laws regulating employment and work, education, social protection, electoral law, etc. The application of this principle is defined in greater detail in the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment Act, which provides for equal treatment regardless of personal circumstances. The Act prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination, instructions that might result in discrimination, retaliatory measures, and harassment. It also contains the legal basis for the introduction of temporary special measures aimed at ensuring the actual equality of persons who are in a less favourable situation due to one or more personal

[20] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 55/2008, (66/2008 – amended), 89/2008, Constitutional Court decisions Nos. U-I-25/2007-43 and 5/2009 and U-I-88/2007-17

[21] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 21/2013

circumstances. Alleged violations of the prohibition of discrimination are dealt with by the Advocate of the Principle of Equality. Anyone who believes they are being discriminated against may contact the Advocate either in writing or orally. The Advocate provides explanations as to whether a specific act or omission thereof would constitute a violation of the principle of equality on the grounds of personal circumstances. They also assist those concerned with regard to the application of the right to equal treatment in other proceedings. If an alleged offender fails to respond to the Advocate's request for explanation, fails to carry out their recommendations or fails to notify them on time on the measures taken, the Advocate refers the case to the relevant inspection service.

157. Alleged victims may also contact the relevant inspection services and other administrative authorities and judicial authorities that provide for protection against discrimination; victims can also exercise their right to damages. If suspicion arises in respect of violations, the burden of proof lies with the offender.

7. Right to work, fair remuneration, safety at work, and paid vacation

158. Article 49 of the Constitution guarantees freedom of work, and stipulates that everyone has access to any position of employment under equal conditions. Forced labour is prohibited.

159. The Employment Relationships Act includes a rule on employment contracts concluded for an indefinite period. Fixed-term employment contracts are envisaged in exceptional cases only. During fixed-term employment, the contracting parties have the same rights and obligations as in cases of contracts with no fixed term. Special features relate to the reasons for terminating an employment relationship: expiry of the period for which it was concluded, completion of the agreed work or cessation of the reason for which the contract was concluded. Since fixed-term employment is an exceptional form of employment, the Act emphasises the importance of form: the intention of the contracting parties to conclude an employment contract for a definite period must be expressed in writing; otherwise, the employment contract is assumed to have been concluded for an indefinite period. The Act limits the conclusion of fixed-term contracts to cases stipulated by law and collective agreements, and limits the validity of such contracts. If a fixed-term employment contract has been concluded contrary to law, it is transformed into an indefinite period contract.

160. In Slovenia, health and safety at work are regulated by the Health and Safety at Work Act[32], which entered into force on 3 December 2011. The legal framework is complemented by numerous implementing regulations, adopted on the basis of this and other acts which govern health and safety at work with regard to employees' exposure to specific risks (e.g. asbestos, carcinogens, chemical factors, noise or biological factors), safe and healthy working conditions for specific vulnerable groups of workers (e.g. young workers, pregnant and breastfeeding women or new mothers), for workers using special equipment (e.g. work equipment, protective equipment or screening equipment), and those working in specific environments (e.g. fishing vessels, explosive atmosphere or exploitation of mineral substances). In addition, health and safety at work are guaranteed through implementing organisational regulations that sustain enforcing and implementing the Act (e.g. concerning professional examinations in the field of health and safety at work, the issuing of work permits or training of coordinators).

161. Health and safety at work are also regulated by the provisions of several other acts and related regulations, mainly those governing the organisation of health care, including

[32] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 43/2011

the health care of workers. Furthermore, safety is included in all provisions of the Employment Relationships Act that cover working conditions, such as working time, night work, breaks and rests, and the provisions relating to the protection of specific groups of workers (protection of workers in cases of pregnancy and parenthood, of workers under the age of eighteen, of disabled and older workers). The Health and Safety at Work Act stipulates that employers must allow workers to take part in matters relating to health and safety at work; however, it directs to the Workers' Participation in Management Act[33] with regard to workers' participation bodies, how they are elected and the legal protection of workers through participation. Monitoring the implementation of regulations governing health and safety at work and related responsibilities and measures are stipulated by the Labour Inspection Act[34].

162. More than any other age group, young people in Slovenia are subjected to temporary and short-term employment, which reduces their level of social security. Of all young people in the labour market in 2013, 73.9% were temporarily employed (including student jobs), while among the entire working population, this share was 16.6%. The active employment policy programmes of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities are aimed at providing stable employment as rapidly as possible but also at reducing imbalances between supply and demand in the labour market. Therefore, in cooperation with the Employment Service of Slovenia and the Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund, we are addressing youth unemployment through an active employment policy. In this context, we offer programmes aimed at young people who drop out of education and those who wish to obtain additional training to improve their employability (additional education and training, subsidised employment).

163. In 2013, the Emergency Measures in the Field of Labour Market and Parental Protection Act[35] provided for the implementation of an incentive aimed at promoting indefinite-period employment contracts for persons under 30 years of age. The incentive applies to employers who, between 1 November 2013 and 31 December 2014, conclude employment contracts for indefinite periods with persons of that age who were registered as unemployed at least three months beforehand. For the first 24 months, such employers are exempt from paying compulsory social security contributions.

8. Right to social security

164. Persisting since 2008, the economic crisis has also affected various social rights. Due to higher unemployment and declining income, the risk of poverty has increased among all social groups and in all household types, the most vulnerable being those with no employed members and single-parent households. Poverty risk has also increased among people over the age of 65 (19.6% in 2012), especially elderly women living alone. The risk of poverty among children (up to 17 years of age) has increased from 11.2% in 2009 to 13.5% in 2012. The share of persons who are severely materially deprived (according to at least 4 out of 9 indicators of deprivation) was 6.1% in 2009 and 6.6% in 2012. NGOs note an increasing number of persons without adequate health insurance.

165. Due to the harsh social situation and despite adopting austerity measures for budget consolidation, the Government is trying to safeguard the rights and the status of the most vulnerable population categories, i.e. socially and financially weak groups. According to its strategic documents, Slovenia intends to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or

[33] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 42/1993, 56/2001, 26/2007, and 42/2007 – official consolidated text.

[34] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 19/2014.

[35] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 63/2013.

social exclusion by 40,000 before 2020 (as compared to 2008). Despite the grave social situation, the system of social transfers is still quite effective in mitigating poverty. The effect of social transfers (pensions excluded) on reducing the risk of poverty in 2012 was 46.4%, ranking Slovenia among EU member States with social transfers (pensions excluded) most affecting the risk of poverty rates (in 2012, EU-28 average was 34.4%). Slovenia is still among the countries with relatively small inequalities of income distribution.

166. In April 2013, the National Assembly passed the Resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme for the period 2013–2020, which is the basic document outlining the development of social security for the period. Its main goal is to guarantee social security and social inclusion for citizens and non-citizens of Slovenia. The main objectives referred to in the Resolution are:

- Reducing the risk of poverty and improving social inclusion of socially endangered and vulnerable groups;
- Improving availability and diversity and guaranteeing accessibility of services and programmes; and
- Increasing the quality of services, programmes and other forms of assistance through improved autonomy, better quality management and greater influence of users on the planning and provision of services.

167. Based on the Resolution, implementation plans for specific periods will be drafted, with detailed definitions of the main social security tasks within each relevant period.

168. In 2010, the National Assembly adopted a social legislation package in the form of the Exercise of Rights to Public Funds Act and the Financial Social Assistance Act, which entered into force in 2012. The package radically differs from the previous legislation on social and family transfers and subsidies, and significantly changes the system of benefits financed from public funds. The main objectives of the systemic amendments are:

- Improving transparency of social allocations;
- Enhancing efficiency and targeting of social allocations; and
- Creating a simplified, more friendly and transparent system, and faster and more cost-effective decision-making about the benefits.

169. A year into the implementation of the new social legislation, its effectiveness was evaluated, on the basis of which several amendments to the legislation were passed by the National Assembly in November 2013. Some amendments entered into force on 1 January, and the remainder on 1 September 2014. The changes mainly concern additional protection for the most vulnerable groups (the elderly, single-parent families and large families) and additional improvements of administrative support.

170. Other measures aimed at combating poverty include subsidised rents; subsidised pre-school care, transport for students, textbook funds, and scholarships; active employment policy programmes and pilot programmes under the EQUAL initiative for the employment of vulnerable groups (disabled persons, migrants, Roma); free legal assistance; personal income tax relief and exemption from certain other taxes; and exemption from payment for compulsory health insurance.

171. The Labour Market Regulation Act, which entered into force on 1 January 2011, defines:

(a) Government measures in the labour market aimed at the performance of public services in the field of employment, active employment policy measures and the functioning of the unemployment insurance system;

(b) Providers of measures;

(c) Conditions and procedures for exercising certain rights and services envisaged by the Act;

(d) Financing of measures, and monitoring, assessing and supervising their implementation; and

(e) Referral of workers to other users.

172. The provisions governing active employment policy entered into force on 1 January 2012, providing for:

- Training and education;
- Replacement of workers and job sharing;
- Employment incentives;
- Creation of new jobs; and
- Promotion of self-employment.

173. The Act also defines the guidelines on the implementation of active employment policy measures as a new strategic document, which will serve as the basis for implementing the measures in the next four-year period.

9. Right to education

174. The Constitution guarantees fundamental rights pertaining to education. It stipulates freedom of education. Basic education is compulsory and financed from public funds, and the State creates the opportunities for citizens to obtain a proper education.

175. According to the Constitution, physically or mentally handicapped children and other severely disabled persons have the right to education and training for an active life in society.

176. The Organization and Financing of Education Act[16] stipulates that the education system aims at:

- Ensuring the optimal development of individuals, regardless of their gender, social and cultural background, religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, and physical or mental constitution or handicap;
- Educating for mutual tolerance, raising awareness of the equality of rights for men and women, respect for human diversity and mutual cooperation, respect for children's and human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the fostering of equal opportunities for both genders, and thereby the capacity to live in a democratic society;
- Developing language proficiency and skills and raising awareness of the position of Slovene as the language of Slovenia;
- Fostering awareness of each individual's integrity;
- Developing awareness of citizenship and national identity and knowledge of Slovenia's history and culture;

[16] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 16/2007 – official consolidated text 5, 36/2008 and 58/2009

- Enabling participation in European integration processes;
- Offering equal educational opportunities in regions with special developmental problems, and equal educational opportunities to socially deprived children;
- Guaranteeing equal educational opportunities to children, youth and adults with special needs; and
- Educating for sustainable development and active participation in democratic society, including deeper self-understanding and a responsible attitude to oneself, one's own health, other people, one's own and other cultures, natural and social environment, future generations, etc.

177. Other laws[37] also deal with the rights of national communities, of the Roma community, foreign nationals, and children with special needs. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport regularly publishes calls for applications for research projects relating to social and civic competences, e.g. to the prevention of violence and intercultural dialogue, for projects carried out by educational institutions (recognition and prevention of violence, education for gender equality), and for training qualified professionals (encouraging tolerance and acceptance of diversity, intercultural cooperation and learning, promotion of intercultural dialogue, equal opportunities, and the recognition and prevention of violence). Several projects focusing on human rights education for students are under way.

178. Both compulsory and optional subjects in regular and extracurricular activities are also intended to promote intercultural dialogue.

179. The regulations specify the following groups of children, pupils and students who, for personal, socio-economic or cultural reasons, require either special assistance or additional measures in pre-school institutions and schools:

- Talented pupils and students: schools adapt the implementation of the curriculum for pupils/students whose intellectual abilities are significantly above average or who are exceptionally talented in specific areas, in arts or in sports;
- Pupils with learning difficulties: schools adapt methods and curricular activities accordingly and provide remedial classes and other forms of individual or group assistance;
- Child patients: pre-school and basic education may be provided in hospitals; pedagogical staff in hospitals (1) collaborate with doctors and other medical staff and children's parents and their school/pre-school institutions, (2) provide a report on pedagogical work to the pupil's school, and (3) advise on educational follow-up after discharge from hospital;
- Members of the Roma community: standards for pre-school institutions and schools that include Roma children/pupils are more favourable (class size, children per teacher ratio) than for regular classes; elementary schools can engage an additional teacher or counsellor, who is available to Roma pupils for pedagogical and other types of assistance; if the school has more than 45 Roma pupils, two additional pedagogical assistants may be employed; within a special project, a Roma assistant is being introduced in pre-school institutions and schools to help children/pupils overcome emotional or linguistic barriers and at as a link between each pre-school institution/school and the Roma community;

[37] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 81/2006 – official consolidated text 3 and 102/2007

- Members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities: the Constitution stipulates that in areas where they live, they have the right to receive education in their own languages; in pre-school institutions, two teachers are present for 6 hours per day; with regard to the formation of classes/groups, in elementary and secondary schools, standards are more favourable than in schools attended by the majority population;
- Foreign nationals: in 2007, the "Strategy for the integration of migrant children in the education system" was adopted; on its basis, the "Guidelines on the education of foreign children in kindergartens and schools" were adopted in 2009 and amended in 2011; the Guidelines define the relevant adjustments and also assist pre-school institutions and schools in devising educational activities for foreign children; with regard to pre-school, elementary, secondary and higher education, refugees enjoy the same rights as Slovenian citizens; in accordance with the curriculum, teachers in pre-school institutions organise activities aimed at developing the Slovene speaking skills of children whose first language is not Slovene; upon their enrolment, schools provide Slovene language lessons to non-Slovene native speakers and immigrant pupils; in agreement with their parents, immigrant pupils can benefit from adjusted examination procedures and deadlines; pupils and students who are asylum seekers have free meals and can borrow textbooks free of charge; for several years now, in cooperation with the countries of origin, the ministry responsible for education has been supporting additional mother tongue and cultural classes for elementary school pupils living in Slovenia whose first language is not Slovene;
- Children from socio-economically deprived environments: on the basis of a social service certificate proving that their family is at risk of poverty, they receive priority in pre-school institution admissions; pre-school institutions and schools work closely with the responsible social services; counselling services in pre-school institutions or schools assist families with children, pupils or students in the search for possible support and help (e.g. scholarship, solving financial problems, providing learning space at school, offering textbooks and school materials); schools can also offer pupils individual or group assistance.

10. Right to the best possible physical and mental health

180. Applicable health legislation provides for equal, adequate, high-quality, and safe health care. The entire population enjoys equal rights arising from compulsory health insurance and voluntary health insurance.

181. The Patient Rights Act[18] stipulates the rights of patients as users of health-care services in their relations with health-care providers and procedures for exercising these rights.

182. The Ministry of Health identified the protection of rights of vulnerable population groups as a priority of health care and human rights. Special emphasis is placed on people with mental disorders and serious chronic illnesses and the elderly, on rights related to advances in biomedicine, activities focusing on promoting good health and the prevention of addiction and other illnesses, as well as comprehensive health care and combating exclusion.

183. The Mental Health Act[19] provides for the protection of rights of persons with mental disorders in all types of treatment on closely supervised wards of psychiatric hospitals,

[18] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 15/2008.
[19] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 77/2008.

closed wards of social welfare institutions and under supervised treatment, and defines involuntary hospitalisation procedures before the court.

184. Owing to the constantly increasing need for geriatric services, in collaboration with other relevant ministries the Ministry of Health drafts the legal bases for prolonged health care and is responsible for comprehensive care for the elderly, especially those suffering from cognitive disorders.

185. According to preliminary data for the 2009–2011 period, the maternal death rate was 1.5 per 100,000 live births, while the rate of late maternal death was 13.7 per 100,000. The responsibility for analysing maternal death lies with the National working group for processing data on maternal death, which is part of the Public Health Institute; each maternal death case is dealt with according to a standard protocol. Based on its findings, every three years the Group publishes a comprehensive report, including recommendations for clinical and public health measures relating to reproductive health, focusing on the importance of socio-economic factors, the detection and treatment of mental disorders and the need for education and awareness raising among the general public and medical professionals. Since 2000, inaccessibility to health care has never been the main reason for maternal death in Slovenia, where accessibility to health care for women of reproductive age is not only formally but also actually universal.

186. The Ministry co-finances programmes on reproductive health and reproductive rights at the national, regional and local levels. A particular focus has been placed on women who, due to lack of awareness and social exclusion, do not take advantage of reproductive health-care services; therefore, special programmes to promote and protect reproductive health are aimed at this group. Since post-natal mental disorders and suicide are among the main causes of maternal death in Slovenia, the Public Health Institute published a draft programme in 2013 for the treatment of mental problems and disorders in the perinatal period, which will serve as the basis for other planned activities.

187. The Ministry has been co-financing assistance, consultation and care programmes for persons without compulsory health insurance in the period 2013–2014. With regard to homeless and socially excluded persons, the main focus has been on providing information, accessibility and inclusion in the public health network and compulsory health insurance. This entails field work, the activities of day centres for homeless people and cooperation with the "hidden population" which is excluded from the public health-care system. For the period from May 2013 to November 2014, these activities included regulating the status of uninsured persons; providing information and advice concerning health insurance procedures and the scope of health service rights; accompanying uninsured persons to relevant institutions; providing assistance in the search for personal physicians; and supporting hospitalised homeless people (hospital visits, assistance with administrative procedures during hospitalisation). The Ministry will present the results when the tender closes.

11. Right to adequate housing

188. Slovenia guarantees greater access to adequate housing (including subsidised apartments) through a system of housing subsidies for a portion of market rents to people who are eligible for non-profit rental apartments. If municipalities cannot provide a sufficient number of non-profit apartments through subsidised housing, eligible persons may seek a suitable rental apartment on the market, and part of the difference between the non-profit rent and market rent is covered by the State and municipalities. Households are eligible to a subsidy amounting to up to 80% of a non-profit rent. Payments have been increasing since 2008, when the scheme was introduced, particularly in recent years. In 2013, the increase amounted to 17%.

189. Under housing legislation, municipalities are responsible for providing housing units to the homeless. The term does not refer to apartments, but to units in special purpose buildings intended as temporary housing. No call for applications or similar procedure is required to allocate a housing unit, since social status cannot be foreseen in advance and the list of eligible persons must be kept open to help those in need, the homeless and victims of violence. In this way, a quick response to social and housing distress of individual families is possible.

190. In 2012, municipalities had approximately 500 such units. According to their estimates, more are needed, particularly in urban settlements. However, the amount of EUR 10 million, which was earmarked for this purpose by the Housing Fund, was not fully used by municipalities; therefore, it is currently being considered how to address this issue in cooperation between the State and local communities.

191. The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities finances several programmes to deal comprehensively with the homeless, including their accommodation and food; 237 housing capacities were financed in these programmes in 2013; the number of users was 1,900. In 2013, approximately EUR 850,500 were allocated for this purpose, whereas approximately EUR 1 million were earmarked in 2014.

192. The State devotes particular attention to the housing issues of vulnerable groups, such as young people and young families, large families, disabled persons, families with a disabled family member, citizens with long work experience who lack appropriate housing, and individuals engaged in activities of special importance to the local community. With a view to providing housing for the retired, a Real Estate Fund of Pension and Disability Insurance was created, with more than 3,000 rental apartments at its disposal, which are to be used to resolve the housing issues of retirees.

193. Slovenia is also rich in water resources, so access to healthy drinking water has been relatively well regulated. Municipalities are responsible for the drinking water supply and also for the construction of necessary infrastructure. The Government sets minimum standards that municipalities must attain. Thus, settlement areas with 50 permanent residents or more (population density: more than 5 persons per hectare) must have a public water supply.

194. In places where the public water supply is not guaranteed, residents (owners of buildings) can provide for their own water supply, which provides the right to water supply for all. According to analyses in 2014, 88.6% of residents in Slovenia are connected to the public water supply system, which will also have to be provided in areas with approximately 7% of the population.

12. Domestic violence

195. The Family Violence Prevention Act[40] entered into force in March 2008, defining physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence, as well as the failure to provide due care for family members. Children, elderly and disabled persons enjoy special protection against violence. If the victim of violence is a child, anyone with knowledge of the fact is obliged to report it immediately to the social services, the Police or the State prosecutor's office. The novelty introduced by the Act is the victim's right to have an assistant to accompany him/her in all proceedings related to domestic violence and help in seeking solutions. The victim also has the right to a legal representative to defend his/her interests in proceedings. A multidisciplinary team led by the social services draws up an aid plan for a victim in collaboration with other authorities and organisations. The Act provides

[40] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 16/2008.

for free legal aid in court proceedings to victims of violence. The court can impose certain restrictions in cases of acts of violence, prohibiting the perpetrator from entering the accommodation premises where the victim lives; approaching beyond a specified distance the accommodation where the victim lives; approaching places that the victim regularly frequents; making contact with the victim in any way. At the victim's request, the court can require the perpetrator to leave the common dwelling to the exclusive use of the victim. In the case of a divorce, a partner who is a victim may demand that the other partner (the perpetrator of violence against the victim or his/her children) leave him/her exclusive use of the accommodation in which both partners live. In order to protect children, the court assigns the residence to the spouse with whom the children live. All the above restrictions and measures apply for a maximum of six months, with the possibility of an extension for additional six months. Based on this Act, all the authorities concerned (the Police, education, health and social institutions) adopted their own rules on how to respond in the event of domestic violence and provided adequate training for qualified professionals.[41]

196. In 2013, the Act amended the power of the Police to issue a restraining order by adding the possibility of taking into custody a perpetrator who breaches such an order.

197. The social services have 12 coordinators tasked with domestic violence prevention, who operate at the regional level. Their duties include providing expert support to their colleagues who deal with cases of violence, and assistance in setting up and organising a general crisis management team at the local level. As external experts, they participate in the work of these groups and, if required, organise and lead the operations of a joint inter-institutional team to assist adult victims of violence; they also lead and coordinate the work of the intervention services if a restraining order is issued in respect of a place or person. The coordinators also assist in the organisation and maintenance of the network of providers and programmes of social assistance for the prevention of violence and against its proliferation, organise and plan specialised training for qualified professionals, and raise awareness among the expert and general public of their views on various forms of violence and its extent (round tables, work with target groups, e.g. children, the elderly). Their tasks also include analysing the situation in their respective regions, coordinating and evaluating development (innovative) programmes for perpetrators and victims of violence, and preparing and arranging facilities for short-term accommodation. In addition, the coordinators must take part in regular training and introduce new, more effective forms of assistance to both families and individuals.

[41] The Rules on the Cooperation of Authorities and on the Work of Social Services, Multidisciplinary Teams and Regional Services in Dealing with Domestic Violence entered into force in April 2009. The Rules on the Treatment of Domestic Violence for Educational Institutions entered into force at the end of 2009. The Ministry of Health drafted the Rules and Procedures for Dealing with Domestic Violence in Performing Health Care Services and established a working group for the drafting of clinical guidelines and an educational programme for health care professionals on addressing domestic violence when performing health care services. The training for qualified professionals was also implemented by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. The Rules on Cooperation between the Police and Other Authorities in the Detection and Prevention of Domestic Violence (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 25/10) took effect in 2010, and in 2013, a special arrangement was concluded between the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Ministry of the Interior – Police regarding the tasks for the protection of children, which are provided for in the Family Violence Prevention Act. The new Rules Restricting Access to a Certain Person, Place or Area took effect on 15 July 2014 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 49/14), regulating in detail certain novelties regarding domestic violence prevention, as provided for under the Police Tasks and Powers Act.

198. A special article of the new Criminal Code prohibits domestic violence, which can take various forms, and is directed against a person with whom a perpetrator lives or has lived in a family or other permanent community. The former Penal Code defined the forms and effects of violence in the family in different articles.

199. The National Assembly passed the Resolution on the 2009–2014 National Programme on the Prevention of Family Violence[42]. This is a strategic document, specifying the objectives, measures and key institutions for reducing and preventing domestic violence. In May 2010, the Government adopted the Domestic Violence Prevention Action Plan 2010–2011.

200. Accommodation capacities for female victims of violence have been increased. In 2014, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities co-financed programmes for twenty-five safe houses, emergency shelters and maternity homes, with approximately 445 beds. One of the safe houses has also been adapted for the needs of disabled persons, and one crisis centre has been adapted for the needs of the elderly. The network of crisis centres and shelters was expanded to regions where such services were previously unavailable, and accommodation facilities for victims of violence are now provided.

201. Various training courses, particularly for the judiciary, are being held to improve the competence of qualified professionals responsible for violence prevention and to increase their sensitivity, including for dealing with female victims of violence and perpetrators. In addition, training programmes are being held for police officers, in cooperation with other institutions and NGOs, including EU experts. Issues such as preventing violence against women and promoting non-violent conflict resolution will continue to be included in education and training courses for teaching professionals. The activities are part of the measures provided for by the Resolution on the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, 2005–2013.

202. On 8 September 2011, Slovenia signed the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. The ratification process was initiated in 2012, in the course of which the impact of the Convention's provisions on domestic legislation and practice is also examined.

13. Trafficking in human beings

203. Measures on trafficking in human beings in Slovenia are specified in action plans to combat such trafficking which, since 2004, have been drawn up every two years by the Interdepartmental Working Group on the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings. The Group comprises representatives of the relevant ministries, government services, the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office, the National Assembly, and NGOs. The action plans define the basic activities for preventing and combating trafficking; these include legislation, detection, and the investigation and prosecution of trafficking offences; prevention through information, awareness-raising and research; providing assistance and care to victims; training, education and international cooperation.

204. The Action Plan provided the basis for the amendments to the Criminal Code regarding prostitution and trafficking in human beings in 2004, particularly the new criminal offence of Trafficking in Human Beings (Article 387a), while the criminal offences of pimping and brokering prostitution (Articles 185 and 186) were replaced by the new criminal offence of exploitation through prostitution (Article 175). A new Criminal Code was drafted in 2008, amending the provisions on trafficking in human beings (new

[42] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 41/2009.

Article 113). In 2011, the amended Criminal Code (KZ-1B) expanded the criminal offence listed under Article 192 (Neglect and Maltreatment of a Child), and duly amended the article on trafficking in human beings in compliance with Directive 36/2011/EU, particularly in respect of exercising control over persons and their consent to trafficking. A new third paragraph was added to Article 199 of the Code (Undeclared Employment) which explicitly refers to the exploitation of victims of trafficking in human beings. The Witness Protection Act[43] was passed in 2005. It also applies to the protection of witnesses who have been victims of trafficking. The Act amending the Criminal Procedure Act was also adopted, envisaging that an injured party of the criminal offence of trafficking in human beings who is a minor is entitled to an authorised representative responsible for implementing his/her rights. The Aliens Act was amended, defining in a special article and on the basis of Directive 2004/81/EC procedures with alien victims of trafficking. The Act was amended in May 2014, and in Article 56, paragraph 1, a serious reason to believe that an alien may fall victim to trafficking in human beings during his/her stay in Slovenia was included as a reason to refuse to issue a first residence permit.

205. By ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings[44], Slovenia assumed the obligations under this regional instrument. The first round of the monitoring mechanism of this Convention for Slovenia (GRETA) was carried out in 2012, while the report and recommendations for Slovenia were adopted at the Committee of the Parties on 7 February 2014.

206. Preventive activities consist of public awareness-raising, making preventive video spots, reprinting and distributing materials, raising awareness of the target population through NGO projects co-financed by individual ministries, by educating the expert public, especially law enforcement authorities, in cooperation with NGOs, and by providing internal training and education for NGOs. The number of final judgements in respect of trafficking in human beings is increasing every year, which is a result of the attention devoted to providing information for, and the training of, judicial staff.

207. A project providing care for victims of trafficking has been implemented since 2007 on the basis of public tenders and financed by the Ministry of the Interior (safe accommodation) and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (crisis accommodation). The project was estimated to be worth approximately EUR 85,000 annually.

208. In the period between 2011 and 2013, the law enforcement authorities (the Police and State prosecutor's office) detected and dealt with several forms of trafficking; in 2011, there were fifteen criminal trials, in 2012 twenty-seven, and fifteen in 2013. Most of the cases involved exploiting prostitution and other sexual abuse. Instances of forced labour were also detected, such as forced begging and forced commission of criminal offences (e.g. theft). The number of judgements for the criminal offence of human trafficking has also increased; in 2011, there were six, in 2012 eight, and in 2013 only two.

D. Reporting at the national level

209. The Inter-departmental Commission on Human Rights is the central body in Slovenia for coordinated reporting to international human rights control mechanisms. In the

[43] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 113/2005, 81/2006 – official consolidated text I and 110/2007.

[44] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 62/2009.

period 1993–2012, this body was called the Interministerial Working Commission for Human Rights.

210. The Commission was set up in April 2013 by the Government to steer the reporting of the national situation to treaty bodies of the United Nations, the universal periodic review and regional organisations, and to supervise the implementation of recommendations.

211. The Commission is authorised to cooperate with representatives of other institutions and civil society.

212. Its members include representatives of the Office of the Prime Minister, all ministries and the Statistical Office. In April 2014, the Government enlarged the membership with two representatives from academia and two from civil society organisations. The academic representatives are appointed by the Slovenian Rectors' Conference, while the representatives of civil society organisations are appointed by the Centre for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs – CNVOS.

213. A department holding relevant powers has been tasked with drafting reports on the basis of individual international legal instruments. It also manages the process of drafting reports in cooperation with other participating bodies and is responsible for informing and engaging the interested public. Prior to submitting the report to the Government for examination and approval, the department (coordinator) must present it for approval to the Inter-departmental Commission on Human Rights.

III. Information on non-discrimination and effective legal remedies

A. Gender equality and the fight against gender-based discrimination

214. In Slovenia, gender equality is a right, a goal and a horizontal principle permeating all spheres of life of both women and men during all periods of life. The Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act provides for the fundamentals to improve the situation of women and create equal opportunities by removing obstacles to establishing gender equality, by preventing and eliminating the unequal treatment of persons on the basis of their gender as a form of discrimination and by creating the conditions for establishing the equal representation of women and men in all spheres of social life. The Act envisages measures and strategies to enhance the role and situation of women and gender equality; Slovenia is bound by treaties and political commitments to meet these objectives. The year 2005 saw the adoption of the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2005–2013, which is being implemented by ministries and government offices through two-year periodic plans; on the basis of a reporting system, the Government regularly examines the adequacy and effectiveness of activities performed and, if required, changes, adapts or upgrades them. Every two years, the Government reports to the National Assembly on the implementation of the National Programme. The implementation of the first National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men was evaluated after the conclusion of its validity. The evaluation report assessed the implementation of the goals, as well as the results and effects of the measures and activities. The evaluation also provides the basis for the drafting of a new national programme for the 2014–2021 period, which has already been initiated.

215. Notable progress in government policy on strengthening the role and the situation of women and guaranteeing gender equality has been achieved in education, employment, equal pay for equal work, violence against women and trafficking in women and girls. The

progress was facilitated by the new legislation, the National Programme and action plans on equal opportunities, as well as by the implementation of special action plans and programmes: action plans to combat trafficking in human beings; the 2009–2014 National Programme on Prevention of Family Violence; providing regular information for women and relevant stakeholders; systematic awareness-raising among the public and target groups; education, training and cooperation with NGOs, trade unions, research and educational institutions; encouraging media to assume a positive role in ensuring gender equality and the inclusion of men in endeavours to achieve gender equality.

216. The Government has taken a number of measures to promote balanced gender representation in decision-making, which facilitate the participation of women and men on an equal footing on the candidate lists for elections to the European Parliament, the National Assembly and municipal councils, as well as measures promoting the balanced representation of women and men on public committees, commissions and other bodies. The parliamentary elections on 4 December 2011 were an important milestone, as the share of women deputies in the National Assembly had increased to one third. On 27 February 2013, Slovenia's first female Prime Minister was elected, whereby a woman occupied the highest position in the executive branch for the first time in the history of independent Slovenia. In the early parliamentary elections on 13 July 2014, the share of female deputies increased to 35.6%.

217. The Employment Relationships Act provides for equal pay for equal work, including relevant recommendations of the International Labour Organization. The Government has undertaken no additional activities to reduce gender-based wage gap, as the data for 2012 indicate that this gap is insignificant in Slovenia (2.5 percentage points).

218. It also continues to implement various approaches to identify and eliminate stereotypes, particularly by organising consultations, trainings and seminars, and by making analyses and studies on the division of power between women and men in different areas. In addition to activities to promote education, its efforts are also aimed at encouraging equal sharing of domestic duties between women and men, including responsible partnership and parenting. Such endeavours particularly include the promotion of joint responsibilities and a more equal division of duties between men and women in caring for children, older people and other family members in need of assistance.

219. Staff members of the Ministry of Defence and members of the Slovenian Army receive regular training on gender equality, equal opportunities and the protection of human dignity. Programmes of military education and training at all levels, also for candidates for the post of civilian expert, include human rights, the protection of human dignity and the indispensable role of women in the preservation and building of peace at the local and consequently also global levels. The training programmes are complemented with the content of United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820, including issues relating to the prohibition of any discrimination according to the Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment Act.

220. The Employment Relationships Act prohibits sexual harassment and mobbing at work. The Health and Safety at Work Act stipulates that in workplaces with an increased risk of third-party violence, the employer is obliged to ensure that the design and equipment of the workplace reduces the risk of violence and allows assistance to be provided. The employer must plan procedures to be taken in the case of violence and communicate them to employees. The employer must also take measures to prevent, eliminate or contain cases of violence, mobbing or harassment or other forms of psycho-social risk at work that are detrimental to employees' health. In 2009, the Government adopted the Decree on the Protection of Dignity of Persons Employed in State Administration Authorities with a view to ensuring an appropriate work environment, free of sexual or other harassment or mobbing. The Decree provides for measures to prevent sexual or other harassment or

mobbing, including measures for cases of actually completed sexual or other harassment or mobbing. Each authority should appoint its own counsellor to provide assistance and information; prior to that, the counsellor must take part in training.

B. Elimination of discrimination based on sexual orientation

221. The currently applicable legal regime regulates the status of same-sex partnerships in the Civil Partnership Registration Act[45]. On the basis of the registration of their partnership, partners acquire certain rights and obligations, particularly with regard to property (the right to maintenance and alimony, to acquire common property and regulate pecuniary relationships within the partnership, the right to housing protection, the right to inherit a share of common property after one of the partners dies and the right to be informed on the health of an ailing partner and to visit the partner in health-care institutions).

222. In two proceedings assessing constitutionality, the Slovenian Constitutional Court established the non-conformity of the legal regulation of inheritance, which relates to inheritance in a registered same-sex partnership or common-law marriage.

223. In decision No. U-I-425/06-10 of 2 July 2009[46], the Court established the non-conformity of Article 22 of the Act with the Constitution, ruling that it is to be remedied by the National Assembly within six months of the publication of the decision in the Official Gazette. Until the established non-conformity has been remedied, the same rules apply to inheritance between partners in registered same-sex partnerships and as between spouses in accordance with the Inheritance Act[47]. In the statement of grounds for the above decision, the Constitutional Court specified that a registered partnership constitutes a relationship similar to a marriage or common-law marriage. Such a partnership is also characterised by a stable connection between two people who are close to each other, and who help and support one another. The same actual and legal bases apply to registered same-sex partnerships and to partnerships between a man and a woman; therefore, the regulation of inheritance as stipulated in Article 22 of the Civil Partnership Registration Act is not based on tangible or objective circumstances, but on sexual orientation. The latter, although not explicitly mentioned, is certainly among the personal circumstances under Article 14 of the Constitution.

224. In a review of the constitutionality of the Inheritance Act, the Constitutional Court established with Decision No. U-I-212/10-15 of 14 March 2013[48] the non-conformity of the Act with the Constitution. It also ruled that until the non-conformity has been remedied, the same rules apply to the inheritance between same-sex partners living in a durable living community, but who have not registered a partnership according to the Civil Partnership Registration Act, and common-law partners, provided there is no reason which would render a partnership between them invalid. The Court further ruled that the non-conformity established is to be remedied by the National Assembly within six months of the publication of the Decision in the Official Gazette. In the statement of grounds, the Court

[45] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 65/2005.
[46] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 55/2009.
[47] Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia Nos. 15/1976, 23/1978, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia/I No. 17/1991 – Use of the Monetary Unit of the Republic of Slovenia Act, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 13/1994, 40/1994 – Constitutional Court Decision 82/1994, 117/2000 – Constitutional Court Decision 67/2001, 83/2001, 73/2004, 31/2013 – Constitutional Court Decision 99/2013.
[48] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 31/2013.

specified that the only difference between unregistered partnerships and the legally contracted same-sex partnership is the absence of formal marriages contracted before the relevant State body (like a common-law marriage differs from marriage). However, in both forms of same-sex partnership, the actual situation in terms of content is the same. Partners in unregistered partnerships share the same close personal ties as those living in common-law partners.

225. Based on the findings of the Constitutional Court that the actual and legal bases of such partnerships are basically the same (same-sex partnership and partnership between a man and a woman), and that differentiation in the legal regulation of the two partnerships, including their legal consequences, is not based on a tangible or objective circumstances, but on sexual orientation, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is currently drafting the Civil Partnership Act. The draft law defines civil partnership as a relationship between two women or two men, and regulates its registration, legal consequences and termination. Such a partnership has the same legal consequences as marriage in all spheres of law, unless otherwise provided by law. The draft law also defines an unregistered civil partnership as a durable living community of two women or two men, who have not registered a civil partnership, and there is no reason to render a civil partnership between them invalid. According to the draft law, such a partnership has the same legal consequences for the partners as a registered civil partnership. In other domains, such partnership has the same legal consequences as the common-law marriage, unless otherwise provided by law. 30 November 2014 is the last date for the adoption of the Civil Partnership Act by the National Assembly.

C. Protection of rights of national and other ethnic communities

226. The Constitution provides for individual rights that are intended to preserve the ethnic, linguistic and cultural features of members of all ethnic groups. These rights are contained in Article 14 (Equality before the Law), Article 61 (Expression of National Affiliation) and Article 62 (Right to Use One's Language and Script).

227. A wide range of measures for members of various national and ethnic groups is systematically implemented by the Ministry of Culture which, in cooperation with members of these groups, establishes their needs for the protection of cultural features and elaborates measures for their integration. The preservation of the cultural rights of these groups is guaranteed through financial (funding of projects), organisational (expert assistance, counselling, workshops, mediation) and normative measures (special provisions in the basic act on culture; active participation of these communities in the drafting of regulations). Three programmes are being carried out: a special programme, which means the implementation of positive discrimination in accordance with the expression of specific cultural needs; an integration programme within which to develop high-quality measures for the integration of members of ethnic groups into cultural life; and a programme for their human resource development, which is funded by the European Social Fund. The Ministry also ensures the vitality and development of the cultures of these groups by developing dialogue with artists engaged in the field of national and ethnic communities; whenever possible, arrangements between countries also include their protection. If required, the Ministry also commissions research studies to obtain a deeper insight into the situation of individual national and ethnic groups.

228. The Resolution on the National Programme for Language Policy 2014–2018, which was approved by the National Assembly in 2013, assessing the situation and setting out policy on languages, envisages the following measures for speakers of minority languages (i.e. all language communities): language training for civil servants or officials for communication in minority languages; the education of translators and interpreters for

potential shortage languages; the promotion of linguistic minorities in education, in communication and the media, in cultural activities, and scientific research; ensuring adequate space in public media programmes in the languages of speakers whose first language is not Slovene and who desire such a presence in the media.

229. The national territory of Slovenia has traditionally and historically been settled by (autochthonous) Italian and Hungarian national communities and the Roma community.

230. The status and special rights of the Italian and Hungarian national communities are set out in Articles 64 and 11 of the Constitution and are guaranteed regardless of the size of these communities. Their organisation and fundamental rights are specified in the Self-Governing Ethnic Communities Act[49]; their status is also defined by approximately 90 laws and other regulations, ordinances and statutes of municipalities in ethnically mixed areas, as well as by bilateral and multilateral treaties. All regulations relating to the implementation of the rights and status exclusively of the Italian and Hungarian national communities are adopted in agreement with their representatives. The two national communities are directly represented in the representative bodies of local self-government and, with one representative each, in the Slovenian National Assembly.

231. Slovenia has developed two different models of education for members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities, which share the same objectives: bilingualism and the co-existence of the two nations and cultures with the majority population. For the implementation of the rights of members of the Italian national community in pre-school, elementary, general secondary and secondary vocational education in the areas defined as ethnically mixed, education is provided in the Italian language. The Slovene language is a compulsory subject in these schools. In educational institutions in ethnically mixed areas providing education in the Slovene language, the learning of the language of a national community is compulsory. In ethnically mixed areas populated by members of the Hungarian national community, education is provided bilingually, in the Slovene and Hungarian languages. Pre-school institutions and schools are attended by children of Slovenian and Hungarian nationalities, which enables pupils to learn a second language and become familiar with the culture of the other nation. Educational activities are carried out in both languages. When learning the mother tongue and the second language, pupils are divided into groups, which helps them learn their mother tongue at an advanced level.

232. The status and rights of members of the Roma community are regulated by Article 65 of the Constitution, the Roma Community Act[50] and other sector-specific laws. In addition, the status of the Roma community is regulated comprehensively by a special act which stipulates that State authorities and self-governing local community bodies must ensure the implementation of the special rights of the Roma community; it regulates the organisation of the Roma community at the national and local levels, including financing.

233. In March 2010, the Government adopted the National Programme of Measures for Roma 2010–2015 to ensure the operationalisation of the Act. The National Programme is being implemented through sector-specific programmes and measures (action plans in individual sectors) by relevant State authorities and self-governing local community bodies. This is the main strategic document on this issue, including measures to improve the housing conditions of members of the Roma community, raise their educational level, increase employment, improve health care for the Roma community, and preserve its language and culture, as well as measures to combat discrimination and to promote tolerance in society. The implementation of the Programme is monitored by the

[49] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 65/1994

[50] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 33/2007

Government Commission for the Protection of the Roma Community; in addition, the Roma Community Act stipulates that the Government must annually report to the National Assembly on the implementation of obligations under the Act.

234. Within their competence, ministries and government services must devote special attention to Roma issues and include them in national programmes in their respective areas of work. In Slovenia, acts concerning the Roma community are adopted after consulting with the community. The Roma Community Council of the Republic of Slovenia was established to represent the interests of the Roma community in Slovenia in relation to State authorities. On the basis of the Local Self-Government Act[51], the Roma community is represented with its own elected representative on the municipal councils of 20 local communities. In these municipalities, special municipal council working bodies have been established to monitor the situation of the Roma community.

235. The 2004 Strategy for the Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia, amended in 2011, contains a number of measures: the inclusion of Roma children in pre-school institutions at least two years prior to their enrolment in elementary school; the inclusion of Roma assistants in the work of educational institutions to function as a bridge between the pre-school institution or school on the one hand and the Roma community on the other; the introduction of Romani as an optional subject; teaching the Slovene language; the introduction of Roma culture, history and identity into lessons; the prohibition of homogeneous classes (segregation) of Roma children; the introduction of individualisation, internal and flexible differentiation and different forms of learning assistance; building confidence in school and the elimination of prejudice; in-service training of qualified professionals. The Union of Roma of Slovenia was involved throughout in the drafting of the document, and its President also chairs the working group for the drafting of annual action plans for the implementation of the Strategy, which is aimed at providing training for Roma so that they can contribute to the effective integration of their population into various forms of education.

236. The following activities have also been carried out in education: a network of schools with Roma pupils has been formed, allowing teachers to exchange experience and good practices, and providing them with additional training; schools have implemented projects and other activities of intercultural dialogue; proposals have been submitted to standardise Romani for teaching purposes; occupational standards for Roma assistants have been developed; a project to develop methods (and materials) for teaching Slovene as a foreign language has been implemented; the syllabus for a course in Roma culture has been drafted and adopted; programmes for the vocational training of qualified professionals have been implemented for successful work with Roma children; Roma assistants have been trained; a project introducing and educating Roma assistants has been implemented with the support of the European Social Fund (ESF); through an ESF project, special attention was devoted to developing and implementing various models and concepts of pre-school education, and the education of children and parents, with a special focus on the development of family literacy, the professional and personal development of qualified professionals, the implementation of various forms of teaching assistance for Roma pupils and students and fostering activities and programmes for cooperation between Roma parents and children, including their cooperation with the non-Roma population; the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport co-finances the education of adult Roma; the project of introducing and educating Roma assistants has been supported by ESF funds; young Roma intellectuals are striving to raise awareness among members of the Roma

[51] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 72/1993 – official consolidated text, 76/2008, 79/2009, 51/2010, and 40/2012 – Public Finance Balance Act.

community of the significance of knowledge and education through the Roma Academic Club; Roma education incubators have been introduced which are intended to provide extra-curricular activities, education for older Roma and leisure-time activities.

237. In 2011, the National Assembly approved the Declaration on the Status of National Communities of Members of Nations of the Former SFRY in the Republic of Slovenia, in which it expresses its views on the issues of the national communities of the former SFRY, with a particular focus on their right to ethnic self-identification, self-organisation, the development of culture, cultivation of languages and scripts, preservation of history and organised public presence.

D. Protection of children's rights

238. The first Programme for Children and Youth 2006–2016 was drafted in 2006 in compliance with the recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Programme includes all important areas of the life of children, particularly those where unresolved or new problems which children and youth face in modern society are detected. It also includes complementary qualitative and quantitative objectives, as well as development guidelines and activities that are essential to the implementation of the goals set. Individual chapters touch upon normative, administrative-systemic and programme levels, as well as upon the specific implementation of children's rights in practice. It is a priority to focus on guidelines and activities that introduce changes, amendments or new solutions within the established activities implemented by national or other services engaging in child care. The Programme for Children and Youth will be implemented with funds earmarked for the financial realisation of each separate programmed activity or envisaged task.

239. The Government devotes particular attention to improving the situation of children. In view of the rapid social and economic changes in the country, which affect the socio-economic situation of families and their children, the Government adopted the amended Programme for Children and Youth 2006–2016 for the 2013–2016 period on 10 October 2013, which takes into account the difficult situation of certain families, who are all the more vulnerable to the risk of poverty and social exclusion due to the general crisis.

240. A pilot project "Child Advocate – Voice of the Child" was launched in 2006. The project is aimed at elaborating a model programme of the child advocate; its substantive and organisational basis would allow for its inclusion in the formal system and thus ensure its implementation at the national level. In compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the model would enable children to participate actively in decision-making processes.

241. Prior to the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Service in the Slovenian Armed Forces Act[32] was amended: Article 7 now stipulates that military service or other jobs in the army cannot be performed by persons under 18 years of age.

242. In its Resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme 2006–2010,[33] the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities defined a network of maternity homes, shelters and counselling for women and child victims of violence, with a current capacity for some 400 persons at several locations throughout Slovenia. The assistance network for violence prevention is focused on providing safe accommodation

[32] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 68/2007

[33] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 39/2006

and psycho-social support for mothers and their children. The initiative to launch such programmes has to come from local communities or individual organisations within them. Most of the programmes that are part of the network have been verified, and thereby acquired the status of public social protection programmes.

E. Patients' rights

243. With the adoption of the Patients' Rights Act, a comprehensive system of patients' rights has been established, which is intended to provide equal, adequate, high-quality and safe health care. The Act is based on confidence and respect between a patient and a physician or other health care professional and regulates 14 rights.

244. These rights also include the right to access to health care and the provision of adequate preventive health care services, in accordance with current medical doctrine. By its nature, the right to emergency medical assistance is an absolute right and may not be conditional, especially not regarding payment or referral.

245. Patients have the right to equal access and treatment in health care, regardless of any personal circumstance (e.g. age, religion or belief, gender, nationality, pecuniary circumstances).

246. Other rights include: free choice of physician and health care service provider, adequate, high-quality and safe health care, the respect of patients' time, obtaining information and participating, making autonomous decisions on medical treatment, taking into account the expressed will, prevention and relief of suffering, obtaining a second opinion, accessing medical files, privacy and personal data protection, remedying violations of patients' rights and free assistance in the implementation of patients' rights.

247. The right to deal with patients' rights violations guarantees an adequate two-stage procedure. The first stage is carried out before the responsible person of the health-care provider. If a dispute is not resolved at this stage, a patient can request protection during the second stage in a procedure before the Commission for the Protection of Patients' Rights.

248. Due to their right to free assistance with the implementation of patients' rights, patients may at any time resort to one of the representatives of patients' rights, who provide counselling, assistance or, by authority, even represent patients in the implementation of their rights under the above Act.

F. Rights of persons with disabilities

249. To ensure the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities on an equal footing with others, a number of regulations were adopted on the education, employment, health care, removal of communication obstacles and environmental barriers, self-organising of persons with disabilities and providing financial assistance for their needs. Major programmes, regulations and measures adopted in recent years include:

- Government Action Programme for Persons with Disabilities 2007–2013: based on the principles of ensuring equal opportunities, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability and ensuring access as a precondition for the implementation of rights and social inclusion of persons with disabilities. The Programme includes twelve basic goals with specific implementing measures. Relevant ministries are obliged to report to the Government annually on its implementation. One of the key objectives of the Programme is the non-discriminatory provision of access to work

and employment for persons with disabilities in an open, inclusive and accessible work environment.

- The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons Act[54]: regulates the right to rehabilitation, supported employment, incentives for employment in the open labour market, employment in sheltered workshops and job centres, quota system, etc. The Act significantly improved the situation of persons with disabilities in the labour market.

- The Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Act[55] is a significant additional step towards eliminating discrimination of persons with disabilities. The Act regulates the protection of such persons, particularly the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability and measures to guarantee equal opportunities for persons with disabilities.

- Article 28 of the Act provides for the establishment of the Government Council for the Disabled as an independent tripartite body, including representatives of the main organisations of disabled persons, expert institutions and the Government. The Council operates as an obligatory consultative forum on issues relating to policies on the disabled.

- Revenue from gambling games was earmarked for the work of organisations specialising in disability issues and humanitarian organisations.

- Individual rights of persons with disabilities have been included in a number of regulations applicable to health care, disability insurance, parental care, education, training, and taxation.

- Slovenia was one of the first countries to sign the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, which it ratified in 2008.

- During its Presidency of the EU Council, Slovenia drafted the Resolution on the Situation of Persons with Disabilities in the European Union and organised a presidential conference with an informal ministerial meeting on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the member States.

250. Apart from ministries, the development of disability protection in Slovenia is importantly influenced by the professional institutions and organisations of disabled persons, who can actively co-shape the relevant policies.

251. Implemented since 2003 by the Slovenian Association of Disabled Workers, the project "A Municipality Tailored to the Needs of People with Disabilities" encourages municipalities to respond actively to needs of citizens with disabilities. By the end of 2013, this distinction had been awarded to 17 municipalities, while additional two municipalities became candidates in 2014. Municipalities which have been awarded the title had to analyse the situation together with local organisations of persons with disabilities, and adopt programmes of action. The awarded municipalities must submit annual reports to the Association on the implementation of the Action Programme.

[54] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 16/2007 – official consolidated text 2.
[55] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 94/2010.

G. Non-discrimination and the rights of the elderly

252. Demographic changes in Slovenia[56] are increasingly affecting its economic and social life, particularly due to the generation born during the demographic boom following the Second World War, who are beginning to retire.

253. Slovenia is facing the effects of demographic changes in a number of ways, leaning on international and domestic documents and events such as the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid in 2002, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Ministerial Conference on Ageing in Berlin in 2002, the EU Green Paper Confronting Demographic Change: a New Solidarity between the Generations, a document issued by the European Commission titled Demographic Future of Europe – From Challenge to Opportunity, Conclusions of the Ministerial Conference on Ageing held in Vienna in 2012, etc.

254. With a view to adequately preparing for democratic changes both now and in the future by taking a comprehensive and long-term interministerial approach, the Government adopted in 2006 the Strategy for Protection of the Elderly: Solidarity, Co-existence and Quality Ageing of the Population. On this basis, the Council of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia for Solidarity and Coexistence of Generations and Quality Aging was set up in 2007 to implement the Strategy and ensure continuous and coordinated cooperation between the State, experts and civil society in both planning and implementing policies governing this area. A new strategy is being drafted which is aimed at high-quality ageing, inter-generational solidarity, including the broadest aspects of active and healthy ageing.

255. The Resolution on the National Social Assistance Programme 2013–2020 was adopted in 2013. The new demographic developments have strongly underlined the issue of the elderly in the Programme, and the goals have been tailored to the needs of the increasing social and demographic distress of the population. These goals also include increased community care for the elderly at the expense of institutional care, which was the main form in the past.

256. The documents and legislation adopted on social security, which affect the quality of life of the elderly, resulted in a wider range of services and programmes for the elderly, the development of new concepts of work with users (particularly persons suffering from dementia), the training of qualified professionals for work with the elderly and raising awareness among family members and the environment. The State carried out a number of activities to prevent violence against the elderly and to overcome the age stereotype.

257. Pension and disability insurance saw substantial changes in 2013, with the entry into force of the new Pension and Disability Insurance Act. The 2012 pension system reform adapted the requirements to acquire the right to old age and early retirement pension to demographic changes and longer life expectancy. The basic retirement requirement is the age of 65 years and a 15-year contribution period; a safeguard option was introduced for older persons with a long period of work.

258. Population ageing has had a strong impact on the labour market. According to analyses, demographic trends point to a future decrease in the active working population. It is important that everyone, particularly the elderly, has the possibility of working or returning to the labour market. Measures to motivate the elderly to work are aimed particularly at an active policy to increase their employability and competitiveness, more intensive investment in the human capital of the elderly, improving the working

[56] Over the past 20 years, the share of population aged 65 or more has increased from 10.6% to 17.3%.

environment, which is to be adapted to the ageing work force, and at promoting and awareness-raising of the importance of the elderly in the labour market. The employment of the elderly increasingly requires State intervention through active employment policy programmes. This mainly includes in-service training, subsidised employment programmes for difficult-to-place clients, priority inclusion in public works programmes and various education and training programmes. In addition, to increase the employability of the elderly, the State offers to reimburse social security costs for persons over 50, and a benefit to employers for employing a person aged over 55. Older unemployed people are also included in the project The Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship II.

259. Since 1 July 2013, in compliance with the amended Labour Market Regulation Act, all pensioners (except for those receiving partial old-age or early retirement pension, and who are still partly employed) are eligible to perform provisional or occasional work. Such work will help the elderly re-enter the labour market and reactivate.

260. Slovenia guarantees extensive protection from discrimination on grounds of age or any other personal circumstance. In compliance with the Constitution and ratified treaties, such discrimination refers to actions and decisions by public authorities which could encroach on any human right or freedom or any other right provided for in national legislation. The Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment Act provides for such protection also in the actions of all subjects in the private sector, e.g. in accessing goods and services intended for the public, including housing, inclusion in associations under civil law, access to cultural goods, sport, recreation, etc. Anyone has the right to protection from discrimination, even legal entities (e.g. NGOs of the elderly).

H. Rights of aliens, asylum seekers and migrant workers

261. Entry to, and residence in, Slovenia are governed by the Aliens Act[37], which, in accordance with European legislation, ensures the fair treatment of aliens lawfully residing in the country. As far as possible, the rights of aliens are comparable to those enjoyed by Slovenian citizens. By adopting the Decree on the Integration of Aliens in 2008, Slovenia introduced active integration policy measures, and since 2009 has regularly taken basic integration measures which are aimed at shaping a comprehensive and effective integration policy based on intercultural dialogue (providing information, Slovenian language and culture, history and government system courses, organising intercultural dialogue programmes and programmes for special target groups, etc.), and include elements of public awareness raising.

262. As regards asylum policy, Article 48 of the Constitution stipulates that, within the limits of the law, foreign nationals and stateless persons subject to persecution for their commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms have the right to asylum. In 2007, the International Protection Act[38] replaced the Asylum Act as a new umbrella act which systematically regulates international protection in Slovenia. The Act fully transposes EU Council directives into Slovenian legislation, which, together with two EU Council regulations, provide the legal basis for the Common European Asylum System. In addition, the Act envisages the introduction of efficient and fast asylum procedures, providing citizens of third countries with necessary protection and facilitating their integration into Slovenian society; in the case of a negative decision, the Act envisages the immediate

[37] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 64/2009 – official consolidated text 6.

[38] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 11/2011 – official consolidated text 2, 26/2011, Constitutional Court decisions: Up-456/10-22, U-I-89/10-16, 98/11, U-I-292/09-9, Up-1427/09-16, 83/2012.

return of aliens to their respective countries of origin. Particular attention is devoted to vulnerable groups (applicants, refugees, persons granted subsidiary protection) by providing for a positive distinction with regard to the material conditions of acceptance, health care, psychological counselling and care. The principle of family reunification is taken into consideration for persons enjoying international protection in accordance with Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. International protection is granted to each applicant that meets the requirements under the Act. If the applicant leaves Slovenia, the procedure is discontinued. Some 65% of procedures were discontinued in 2013.

263. Officials conducting international protection procedures are regularly trained and acquainted with relevant international case law. All proposed amendments to relevant legislation on international protection are submitted to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for preliminary observations and comments. NGOs are actively engaged in the implementation of the Act and play an important role in providing psycho-social and learning assistance, performing activities for creative leisure pursuits, as well as rendering assistance with integration into the environment. Their role is also significant in preventing and taking appropriate action in cases of sexual violence and in combating trafficking in human beings. An agreement was signed between the Government and NGOs in June 2008 allowing for the quicker detection and prevention of sexual violence, as well as taking action in this regard with asylum seekers and refugees.

264. Economic and labour migration in Slovenia is governed by the Employment and Work of Aliens Act[59] and the Aliens Act[60]. Sector-specific laws are also important, regulating the socio-economic status and other rights of foreign nationals in Slovenia. The latest amendments to the Employment and Work of Aliens Act of 2007[61] facilitated the requirements for the employment of third-country nationals (elimination of certain administrative barriers to obtaining work permits) and transposed EU legislation on legal migration to the Slovenian legal order. The Strategy for the Integration of Migrant Children and Primary and Secondary School Students in the Education System in the Republic of Slovenia and the Guidelines on the Education of Foreign Children in Kindergartens and Schools were adopted in 2007. The Strategy for the Integration of Immigrants into Adult Education is currently going through the adoption procedure in the National Assembly.

265. Slovenia did not ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; most of the rights contained in the Convention have already been included in the Slovenian legal system and the scope and protection of migrant workers have been adequately regulated at the national level. Slovenia is party to both international covenants on human rights, ILO Conventions No. 97 and No. 143 and the European Social Charter, which all contain a wide spectrum of protection of migrant workers' rights.

I. The "erased" (persons who were transferred from the Register of Permanent Residents to the Register of Aliens after Slovenia's independence)

266. The Aliens Act, which was one of the independence laws of Slovenia, defined an alien, stipulating that its provisions begin to apply to on 26 February 1992 the citizens of

[59] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 76/2007 – official consolidated text 2, and 26/2011 – Employment and Work of Aliens Act 1.

[60] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 50/2011, (57/2011 – amended).

[61] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 52/2007.

other republics of the former SFRY who did not apply for Slovenian citizenship. On this date, they became aliens, requiring a residence permit for continued residence in Slovenia. The permanent residences of citizens of other republics of the former SFRY who did not have Slovenian citizenship were erased from the Register of Permanent Residents. In order to regulate their status, the 1999 Act Regulating the Legal Status of Citizens of Former SFRY Living in the Republic of Slovenia[52] provided for the acquisition of permanent residence permits under more favourable conditions than those stipulated in the Aliens Act. The only requirement for obtaining a permanent residence permit was de facto residence in Slovenia since 23 December 1990 or since 25 June 1991.

267. In its decision No. U-I-246/02-28 of 3 April 2003, the Constitutional Court ruled that the provisions of the Act Regulating the Legal Status of Citizens of Former SFRY Living in the Republic of Slovenia providing for a time limit of three months to file an application for a permanent residence permit had to be repealed, and that the Act was in non-conformity with the Constitution for the following reasons: it does not recognise the permanent residence of citizens of other republics of the former SFRY removed from the Register of Permanent Residents on 26 February 1992 from that date onwards; it does not regulate the acquisition of a permanent residence permit by citizens of States successors to the former SFRY, for whom the measure of the forcible removal of a foreigner was imposed; and it contains no criteria to establish the legal concept of "de facto residence". According to item 8 of the decision, the permanent residence of citizens of other republics of the former SFRY from 26 February 1992 onwards was established on the basis of a permanent residence permit issued in compliance with the Act Regulating the Legal Status of Citizens of Former SFRY Living in the Republic of Slovenia or the 1991 Aliens Act, as amended in 1999, if these persons had been deleted from the Register of Permanent Residents on that date. The Court required the Ministry of the Interior to issue these persons, *ex officio*, with supplementary decisions establishing their permanent residence in Slovenia from 26 February 1992 onwards. In item 23 of the statement of grounds of Decision No. U-II-3/03-15 of 22 December 2003, the Constitutional Court explained the manner of implementation of item 8 of Decision No. U-I-246/02-28, namely that the Decision of the Constitutional Court provided the legal basis for issuing supplementary decisions by the Ministry of the Interior. Item 24 of statement of grounds clarified that the Ministry was obliged to take into account the part of the Decision governing the manner of implementation until the legislator prescribed otherwise or regulated the area in a different manner in accordance with the Constitution. With regard to the above, the Ministry began to issue supplementary decisions on 23 February 2009. Persons whose permanent residence registration in Slovenia had been terminated and who have already obtained a permanent residence permit in Slovenia are entitled to a supplementary decision. The Ministry is also drafting a law to remedy other established non-conformities of the Act Regulating the Legal Status of Citizens of Former SFRY Living in the Republic of Slovenia with the Constitution.

268. To resolve the issue of persons deleted from the Register of Permanent Residents, the Republic of Slovenia passed the Act Regulating the Legal Status of Citizens of Former Yugoslavia Living in the Republic of Slovenia[53] in 2010, which entered into force on 24 July 2010. The Act was passed by the National Assembly with a view to finally regulating the legal status of persons deleted from the Register of Permanent Residents. The amending Act also sets out the requirements to be met by a foreign national who was citizen of another republic of the former SFRY on 25 June 1991 and who has not yet obtained a permanent residence permit in the Republic of Slovenia to obtain the permit

[52] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia Nos. 61/1999, 54/2000.

[53] Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 50/2010, hereafter amending Act.

regardless of the provisions of the Aliens Act. The amending Act also lists cases in which it is deemed that citizens of other republics of the former SFRY erased from the Register of Permanent Residents had permanent residence permits and registered permanent residence also retroactively, i.e. from the cessation of registration of permanent residence onwards (in respect of which they are issued with a special decision).

269. In addition to the amending Act, which regulates the status of persons erased from the Register of Permanent Residents in Slovenia and guarantees persons who left Slovenia the possibility of obtaining permanent residence permits, also retroactively, Slovenia adopted a special compensation scheme in 2013, in the form of an act providing for the redress of damages suffered by these persons. The Act on Compensations for Persons Erased from the Register of Permanent Residents, which entered into force on 18 December 2013 and took effect on 18 June 2014, was published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No. 99 of 3 December 2013.

270. The Act provides for compensation for damage suffered by persons erased from the Register of Permanent Residents after Slovenia's independence, remedies the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and executes the judgement of the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights of 26 June 2012 handed down in *Kurić and others* v. *Slovenia*. The Slovenian legal order systemically provides for just satisfaction, i.e. compensation for damages suffered by persons erased from the Register of Permanent Residents. In addition to pecuniary compensation, the Act on Compensations provides for other forms of just satisfaction, providing or facilitating access to rights in various other areas regarding which it was deemed that such benefits could be useful or necessary. According to the Act on Compensations, eligible persons will be entitled to the payment of contributions for compulsory health insurance, to inclusive and priority consideration in social assistance programmes, to facilitation in exercising rights to public funds, to State scholarships, to equal treatment as Slovenian citizens in resolving housing problems, to access to the education system, and to participation or priority treatment in integration programmes.